



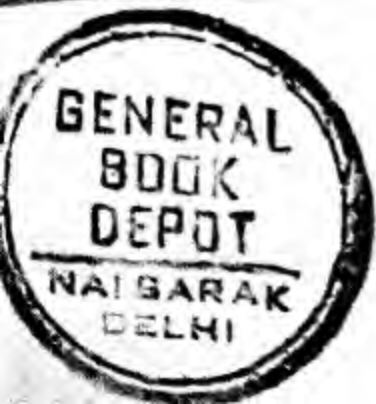
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SHORT PLAYS FROM HISTORY

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SHORT PLAYS FROM HISTORY

EDITED BY

A. E. M. BAYLISS M.A.

AUTHOR OF

"EIGHT ONE-ACT PLAYS" ETC.

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PREFACE

THIS book runs on similar lines to my *Junior One-Act Plays of To-day*, save that the subject-matter is entirely historical and is arranged chronologically. As before, I have tried to cater for as wide a range of interests as possible and have included none but copyright items, most of which have been written very recently and do not appear in other anthologies.

Chosen mainly for reading and acting in the form-room, the plays in the present volume will, I hope, be found equally useful for public performance. Full particulars of the addresses from which permission for such performances must be sought are in each instance clearly indicated.

For permission to reprint the plays grateful acknowledgment is due to the following authors and publishers: Mr L. du Garde Peach for *The Danes are Here!*; Mr Joe Corrie for *The Maid of Domrémy*; the respective authors or their representatives and Messrs Samuel French, Ltd., for *The King decides*, *Royal Interlude*, *Who comes o'er the Sea?*, and *Madame la Baronne*; and the respective authors and Messrs George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., for *Palissy the Potter*, *Charles II at Charmouth*, and *A Puppet King*.

A. E. M. B.

NOTE

Applications for permission to perform any of these plays should be made, unless otherwise directed, to the publishers in writing at least three weeks before the proposed performance. Full particulars should be given of date, place, and admission fee (if any).

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INTRODUCTION

THIS volume will give you an opportunity of studying and acting plays which are much shorter and more modern than those of Shakespeare. You may have found it difficult to sustain interest in a five-act comedy such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, partly because it is rather complicated in structure and partly because you cannot read it in a single lesson. Then, again, a full-length play has generally to be 'cut' a great deal before you are allowed to act it on the school stage.

It is possible, of course, to manufacture something short by adapting stories or episodes from Shakespeare, but the result is not nearly so satisfying as a complete one-act play, which has a definite plan and unity of its own.

Now, the short play, like the short story, is a special form of art, and as such requires a special technique on the part of the author. For this reason it should be studied for its own sake, and not merely as an approach to the study of full-length drama. You will find, as a rule, that a one-act play is made to turn upon a single idea or situation, and that in working this out in dramatic form the author has a single end in view.

The essence of all drama is *conflict*. Though the playwright's purpose may vary from time to time, he relies upon some sort of conflict in developing his theme. In stories of adventure you have noticed that the hero is made to struggle against odds, and whether he succeeds and lives 'happily ever after,' or fails gloriously, and so wins your sympathy and admiration, you are interested in the 'conflict' which helps to determine his character.

The same thing happens in a play. Sometimes this conflict is one of 'wills'; often (as you will see from the comedies in this book) it is one of 'wits.' When there is a struggle between the forces within a man's own soul we have also an inner conflict. In any case, the development of character and the sequence of events must proceed on natural lines, so that no highly improbable or impossible coincidences occur. This does not mean that the author has no surprise 'up his sleeve.' On the contrary, the element of surprise, like that of suspense, is one of his most powerful aids in securing dramatic effect. It does mean, however, that no natural development of a situation is possible unless the various characters behave consistently with what we are led to expect of them from the means of judgment at our disposal. This consistency is really what is often referred to as the unity of action.

The structure of the drama forms an interesting study in itself, and your appreciation of a play will depend, at least in part, on your knowledge of the way in which the author goes to work. In the one-act play, where a single dramatic situation is dealt with, the principle of economy is all-important. There is no time for discursiveness. The author has to capture the interest of his audience at the outset, and then take care to retain it to the end.

The following scheme has been generally adopted to illustrate dramatic structure:

1. *Exposition.* Here the situation is explained and the characters introduced. Important events may have happened before the rise of the curtain. These are made known to the reader or audience in various ways, which should be studied in different types of play.

2. *Complication.* Here interest is increased by the introduction of fresh factors, which *complicate* the situation and delay the solution. This is the stage when difficulties and awkward developments arise.

3. *Climax.* This is the highest point of interest. The

conflict has come to a crisis, and awakes intense feeling. This stage either immediately precedes or coincides with

4. The *dénouement*, or final unravelling of the plot. This may be called the dramatic solution of the problem created by the situation.

Beginnings and endings are highly important. Just as a short-story writer often plunges directly into his theme, so the playwright often takes a neat dive into the middle of a situation. Nevertheless, the audience must be prepared in some way for what they see and hear when the curtain rises. How is this done? By a prologue, by stage directions, or perhaps by the opening speeches? These are questions which you can tackle satisfactorily for yourselves, and so increase your knowledge of technique. Endings, too, vary enormously. In considering different ways of working out a *dénouement* you will realize that some authors leave you with a problem to solve—in other words, the sequel is left to your own imagination. At other times there is a greater sense of finality, the situation is rounded off, and you are provided with a useful opportunity of discussing the methods adopted to secure an effective ‘curtain.’

In the one-act play the climax and the *dénouement* often occur simultaneously and immediately precede an exciting ‘curtain.’ This is especially likely to happen in the modern thriller, where the audience is kept in suspense till the last possible moment.

The playwright has a purpose; try to discover it. Is he merely trying to tell an interesting story? Is he poking fun at a certain type of people or a certain state of affairs? Or is he chiefly concerned in showing you critical points in the development of character? It is possible to achieve more than one aim in writing a good play.

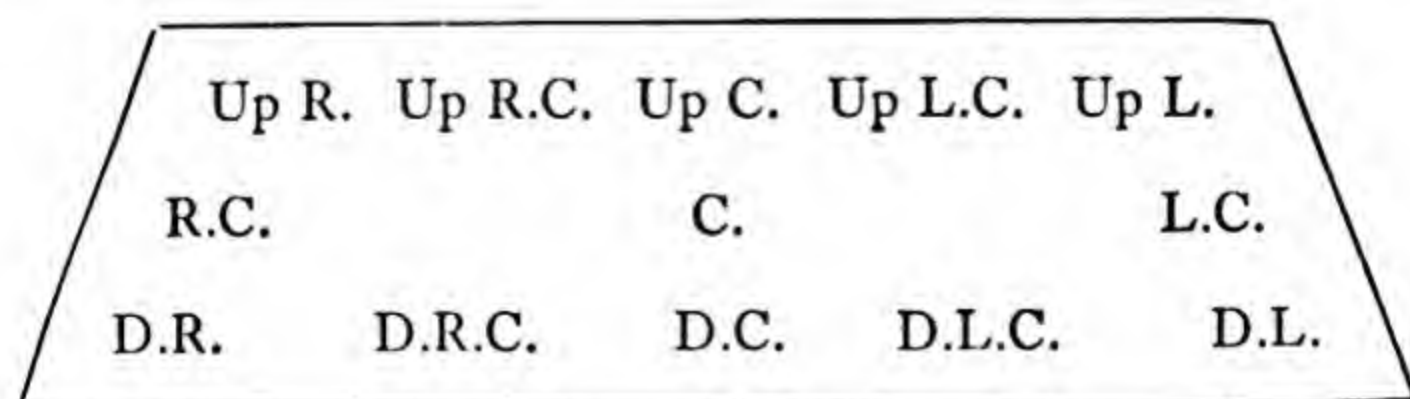
To be able to appreciate drama fully, however, you must go further. As in a story the subject-matter counts a great deal, but there are other points that also deserve consideration. These are more especially connected with

character and dialogue. Ask yourselves whether the author relies for effect on what his characters say or on what they do. Which of them arouse in you the most feeling? Is this feeling one of sympathy or dislike or amusement or admiration? Does it increase as the play proceeds? Sometimes the plot, instead of 'thickening,' seems to 'hang fire.' There is a loss of interest somewhere. You should notice at what points (if at all) this happens. Ask, too, whether your liking for any particular play depends on a special knowledge of the type of people or events portrayed. Is the subject 'topical,' or is it likely to have a permanent appeal?

Now about acting. The following notes are intended to help those of you who have little or no previous stage experience, but at the same time they may prove useful to you even if you are simply reading a play aloud in the classroom. The latter exercise, properly done, should always prove valuable as a preparation for the more difficult (and enjoyable) enterprise of public performance.

Stage Directions. These are indicated at the beginning of each scene and also in the text. It is a good plan to underline them in red ink before rehearsing. The directions R. and L. mean right and left of the performers, not of the audience. 'Up' refers to the back of the stage. 'Down' to the front, near the footlights.

The abbreviations relating to these and various other positions are illustrated in the following diagram:



FOOTLIGHTS

Entrances. To secure an effective entrance the actor must time it properly—*i.e.*, he must decide beforehand whether he is to appear on the stage immediately the cue is given, or whether he is to leave a pause. The *manner* of his entrance is also important. A good rule is to “put oneself into the part” several moments beforehand, so as to obtain greater naturalness and freedom. Care must also be taken to face the audience as much as possible when entering.

Grouping. When a scene is in progress the character who is the centre of interest should dominate the stage. For this purpose he must be perfectly visible to the audience, and the rest of the actors should be grouped on one or both sides of him according to circumstances. This grouping is generally indicated in the stage directions, but a certain amount is left to the discretion of the performers themselves. Team play is essential to secure freedom of action for the predominant figure (or figures), who must be given the right of way and not be embarrassed by the crowding in of the other characters.

Speech, Gesture, and Movement. All three should be as natural as possible and suited to the part. It is unnecessary to shout to be heard at the back of the hall. To be audible the speaker must learn to *direct* his voice—*i.e.*, he must avoid turning his head too far to the right or left, or addressing his boots. The value of pauses is often forgotten. A great deal of dramatic effect may be lost by an actor who is afraid to pause lest the audience should accuse him of having forgotten his words. During laughter or applause the speaker should wait for silence before proceeding; otherwise important lines may be lost. The wait can always be covered by suitable action.

Gesture is often a stumbling-block to beginners, who never know what to do with their hands, and are apt to use awkward mannerisms. It is a good plan to practise before a mirror, and to make each gesture serve a definite

purpose. Otherwise a performer may irritate his audience by meaningless fumbblings, etc.

Movements other than those indicated in the text will suggest themselves as appropriate to show decided changes of thought or emotion in a speaker. Thus he will *rise* or *step forward* impulsively, *sit down* when his feelings overcome him, and so on. The rate at which he speaks or moves should express his state of mind. The more he can 'live' his part the more easily will he effect the changes of tempo suited to the occasion.

The Curtain. With the exception of those actually making an exit all characters left on the stage at the end of a scene should retain their position till the curtain has been completely lowered. Otherwise the effect may be ludicrous.

Producing a Play. Apart from the actual producer, who coaches the actors in their parts, the most important person is the stage manager. He should have his own copy of the play, attend all rehearsals, make notes of all that is necessary to secure the correct setting of the scene, and see that all the properties required are available. He should also indicate the passage of time to the performers, control the curtain and lights, and see that the prompters are in position. It is a good plan for him to appoint separate members to take charge of the lighting, costumes, and properties, so that he can be free in an emergency. For prompting it is advisable to have two people, one in each of the wings. They should have clear voices, and attend all rehearsals, so as not to spoil the final performance by prompting during intentional pauses.

THE DANES ARE HERE!

By L. DU GARDE PEACH

CHARACTERS

EDRED, *a Saxon peasant*

ALFRED, *his wife*

ÆLFRITH, *his son*

ÆTHELSTAN, *a thane*

BROTHER GREGORY, } *monks*

BROTHER FRANCIS, }

A GLEEMAN

A PACKMAN

SAXONS, *followers of Æthelstan*

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THE DANES ARE HERE!¹

This play may be adequately presented upon a curtained stage, but if a large sky backing, with a distant silhouette of a monastery, is available, it will help the illusion.

The necessary costumes can easily be contrived out of dyed hessian.

When the scene opens, the sound of a monastery bell can be heard in the distance. It is ringing unevenly.

EDRED, a middle-aged Saxon peasant, enters, followed by ALFREDA, his wife, a masterful, domineering woman. EDRED is carrying a number of bundles done up in sacking, and is singing dolefully. The tune does not matter.

EDRED [*singing*].

In good King Offa's glorious day,
A man could always pay his way.
The sheep were fat, the taxes lean,
The Danes were few and far between.
But now that Offa's dead and gone—

ALFREDA. Don't be so cheerful.

EDRED. I'm not being cheerful. I'm only singing. A man can't help singing on a lovely spring day like this.

ALFREDA. What is there to sing about, I'd like to know?

EDRED. Nothing very much, if you look at it like that.

¹ All royalties on performances of this play to be paid to the author's agents, Messrs Curtis Brown, Ltd., 6 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2, to whom written application should first be made.

ALFREDA. There's nothing at all, however you look at it. Haven't we been forced to leave our farm?

EDRED. Yes, that's true.

ALFREDA. And won't the Danes burn it when they get there?

EDRED. Probably.

ALFREDA. And won't they kill our pig?

EDRED. It wasn't a very good pig. I never liked it.

ALFREDA. It was the only pig we'd got. If I'd had my way, we'd have stayed there and given the Danes something to think about.

EDRED. Danes don't think—they just kill people. And besides, it was you that suggested——

ALFREDA. Go on! Blame me for trying to save your worthless life!

EDRED. I thought it was *your* life you wanted to save.

ALFREDA. Mine! I'd like to see the Dane that would dare to touch me!

EDRED. So would I.

[EDRED *puts down his bundles and starts singing again.*

ALFREDA. There you go—singing again! And pick up those bundles.

EDRED [*mildly*]. I've decided there are too many of them.

ALFREDA. Not so many as there would have been, if you'd been half a man. It's my belief you *wanted* to leave things behind for the Danes.

EDRED. I admit there are *some things* I wouldn't have minded leaving.

ALFREDA. You've no spirit.

EDRED. We've got away, haven't we?

ALFREDA. No thanks to *you*, if we *have*!

EDRED. If we'd stayed we should have had our throats cut by the Danes. That's why I was singing—out of thankfulness, because it *isn't* cut.

ALFREDA. I don't see why I should suffer because you're thankful. Pick up your bundles and come along. [*Calling*]

Ælfrith! Ælfrith! [*In an ordinary tone*] Where's that boy got to?

ÆLFRITH [*a boy of eighteen—off stage*]. I'm here, mother.
[ÆLFRITH comes in.]

ALFREDA. You mustn't lag behind like that.

ÆLFRITH. If I'd had my way, I'd have *stayed* behind, and *fought* the Danes.

ALFREDA. Of course you would. You've got as much spirit as your mother.

EDRED [*muttering to himself*]. As much sense, too.

ALFREDA. What's that you say?

EDRED. How could Ælfrith have fought the Danes all by himself?

ÆLFRITH. I could have killed some of them.

EDRED. And then they'd have killed you. That's not sense. As it is, all they get is a house with holes in the roof and——

ALFREDA. Whose fault was it there are holes in the roof? You never would mend them, and I'm sure I've complained often enough.

EDRED [*mildly*]. You have, my dear. *Quite* often enough. But it's just as well I didn't mend them. The house would have been burnt just the same, and then all my work would have been wasted.

ALFREDA. The Danes have no right to come and take our farm.

EDRED. What's the use of talking of right? They *have* come, that's all there is to it.

ALFREDA. If you were half a man—but you're not, so what's the use? Pick up your bundles and come on.

EDRED. How can I?

ALFREDA. Why not?

EDRED. Look at the road.

ALFREDA. As though I hadn't got enough troubles! The road's a disgrace.

EDRED. I didn't make it.

ALFREDA. It *would* go down into a swamp. How we're going to cross it, I don't know. Look at it!

[*She looks and points off stage, right.*]

ÆLFRITH. The stone arches of the causeway have all fallen in.

ALFREDA. I can see that for myself. [To EDRED] Well? What are you going to do about it?

EDRED. I don't see that I can do *anything* about it.

ALFREDA. Then I suppose we've all got to sit here until the Danes come and kill us.

ÆLFRITH. I *said* we ought to fight the Danes. Now we shall *have* to.

ALFREDA. Well? Don't stand there *looking* at it! Do something!

EDRED. I was just wondering *what* to do.

[*The monastery bell stops suddenly.*]

EDRED. There! You hear that?

ALFREDA. Hear what?

EDRED. The bell's stopped.

ALFREDA. How can I hear it if it's stopped?

EDRED. Do you know what that means? The Danes have reached the monastery. Yes, I thought as much.

ALFREDA. What did you think?

EDRED. Smoke! That'll be our house.

ALFREDA. How can you stand there calmly and watch your own house burning——?

EDRED. I'm not standing here calmly. I'm very angry. But what can I *do*?

ÆLFRITH. You could *fight*.

EDRED [*annoyed for the first time*]. Don't keep talking about *fighting*! How can I go and fight hundreds of Danes?

ALFREDA. You couldn't fight one, but you might have tried. Here—we must go on. If this road had been kept in proper repair——!

EDRED. I expect it wasn't anyone's *job* to keep it in proper repair.

ALFREDA. There isn't another road for miles. If only we could cross the swamp—look, where the road goes on straight over that hill.

EDRED. We shall have to wade *through* the swamp, that's all.

ALFREDA. And be drowned! I know these swamps. Once you get into them, you can't get out again.

EDRED. You know, this must have been a very *good* road when it was new.

ALFREDA [*exasperated*]. That's the sort of thing you *would* say! It isn't new *now*. It's a disgrace. How are we to escape from the Danes if there isn't a decent road to escape along?

ÆLFRITH. Quick! Father—your sword! There's some one coming.

ALFREDA. Now you'll *have* to fight.

EDRED. No, I won't. It's a monk.

ÆLFRITH. I thought it was the Danes.

EDRED. It couldn't be the Danes yet. They won't be here till they've eaten our pig. That'll take them some time. It had a tough look, that pig.

[A MONK enters breathlessly.]

MONK. Flee, good people, flee! The Danes are upon us!

EDRED. We *are* fleeing. At least, we *were*.

ALFREDA. If the holy fathers at the monastery had done their duty, this road wouldn't be in the state it is.

EDRED. No, that's true.

ÆLFRITH. Did you see any Danes?

MONK. No. I didn't wait to see them. Brother Ambrose was ringing the bell, and Brother Francis was burying the golden ornaments from the altar——

EDRED. Now the Danes will have to bury Brother Francis.

MONK. Holy Saints, what are we to do?

ÆLFRITH. Can you hold a sword, holy father?

MONK. No. I am a man of peace.

EDRED. So am I, when I get the chance.

MONK. If we were to strike off to the right or the left, we might get round the swamp.

EDRED. No. The swamp bends back on both sides—like that. That's why they made the road here. I've heard people say it was the Romans that made it, and they never made a road go two furlongs where one would do.

ALFRED A [exasperated]. What does it matter *who* made it? If you and people like you hadn't spent all your time drinking and *talking*, you'd have kept it in proper order. I've no *patience* with you!

EDRED. You never did have much, my dear.

MONK. We must find some way of crossing it—quickly.

EDRED. If I had something to eat——

ALFRED A. You're always thinking of your stomach! When we're all in danger of our lives, all you can do is——
[*There is a shout from the distance, off R.*]

GLEEMAN [*off stage—distant*]. Hola, there!

EDRED. Who's that?

ÆLFRITH. The Danes! [EDRED *looks off R.*]

EDRED. No, it's not. It's that man on the farther side, where the road takes up again. It's a gleeman. That's good.

ALFRED A. Why is it good?

EDRED. He'll be able to sing to us.

ALFRED A [*disgustedly*]. Sing! With the Danes ready to cut all our throats!

EDRED. There's no harm in a song. Better die cheerfully, if we've got to die.

GLEEMAN [*as before*]. Hola!

EDRED [*calling back*]. Hola!

GLEEMAN. Where are the Danes?

EDRED. Over there—where the smoke is. Eating my pig.

GLEEMAN. Does it take all that smoke to roast a pig?

EDRED. They're burning the house as well.

GLEEMAN. How do I cross this swamp? Is there no other way?

EDRED. No. The road's broken.

GLEEMAN. Then I must make shift to cross here.

ALFRED. You see? He's a *man*! He does something!

ÆLFRITH. Look, he's tying bundles of brushwood to his feet.

EDRED. That's a queer thing to do.

ÆLFRITH. He's going to walk across the swamp on them.

EDRED. I wouldn't like to do that. He'll get stuck half-way across.

ALFRED. He'll have *tried*.

EDRED. What's the good of trying if you don't succeed?

ALFRED. If at first you don't succeed——

EDRED. I'm *sick* of that proverb.

ALFRED. You wouldn't be, if you'd ever tried to live up to it.

ÆLFRITH. Look! He's coming.

EDRED. That's strange. He's got half-way.

ALFRED. He's got brains—which is more than you have.

ÆLFRITH. He's at the worst part now.

EDRED [*complacently*]. Yes, I expect he'll get sucked down. And that'll be the end of *him*.

ÆLFRITH. He's reached the stone pier.

GLEEMAN [*off stage, but nearer*]. Hola there, peasant! You see? Where there's a will there's a way.

EDRED [*disgusted*]. Another proverb!

ALFRED. And a very good proverb, too.

GLEEMAN. I'll bring my harp across with dry strings, yet.

EDRED. We may get a song after all.

ÆLFRITH [*excitedly*]. Well done! Two more steps, and he'll be on dry land. Look! He jumps like a goat!

[*The GLEEMAN enters, carrying a harp. He has bundles of brushwood tied to his feet.*]

GLEEMAN. There! Ah ha, good neighbours! I have yet to see the swamp I can't cross.

EDRED. That was a good idea of yours.

[*The GLEEMAN unties the brushwood and kicks it off.*]

GLEEMAN. A man who travels about as much as I do has to know how to cross a little bit of a swamp.

EDRED [*with childish interest*]. Just bundles of brushwood, eh?

GLEEMAN. Yes. They don't sink in, you see? That is, if you go quickly.

EDRED. It sounds all right, but I shouldn't like to do it.

ALFRED. You've got no spirit.

EDRED. Just because I don't want to go hopping about on bundles of brushwood.

GLEEMAN. They got *me* across safely.

EDRED. Well, now they can get you back again.

GLEEMAN. Why should I go back again?

EDRED. It's no use going any farther in *this* direction. I told you—that smoke over there is the Danes.

GLEEMAN. Quite right. That's where I'm going.

ALFRED. You're going to the Danes?

ÆLFRITH. To fight?

GLEEMAN. No, to sing.

EDRED. What did I tell you? Singing's better than fighting, any day.

ALFRED. They'll cut your throat for you.

GLEEMAN. No, they won't. The Danes like music just as much as Southrons, or the men of Wessex. That's the best of being a Gleeman—you can go anywhere. And there's always plenty to eat among the Danes.

EDRED. My pig.

GLEEMAN. That's right. I must get there before they finish it.

EDRED. They won't finish it yet awhile. It was a very tough-looking pig. Won't you give us a song before you go?

ALFRED. No, he won't!

THANE [*off stage—distant*]. Hola, there!

EDRED. There's some one else calling. Oh. It's the Thane, Æthelstan, and his men.

THANE. Hola, there! How did you cross the swamp?

EDRED [*calling back*]. We didn't cross it, my lord Æthelstan. That's what we *want* to do. The Danes are behind us.

THANE. How many are there?

EDRED. I didn't stop to count them, my lord.

THANE. We must cross. [*Calling to his men*] Baldric, Eldred, Eadwig, and Cynwulf—get branches and brushwood! We must make a way across the swamp. And long, straight saplings. Out with your swords, and cut down the bushes!

EDRED. Look what they're doing!

ALFREDA. They're doing what you ought to have done—long ago.

EDRED [*excitedly*]. Why—they'll soon be across!

ALFREDA. Of course they will. They're *men*!

GLEEMAN. He knows what he's about, that Thane.

ALFREDA. Of course he does.

EDRED. Crossing swamps may be his job. It isn't mine.

ALFREDA. Nothing's your job, except loafing about and letting the Danes burn your house.

GLEEMAN. Is he your husband, mistress?

ALFREDA. Yes. Why?

GLEEMAN. I thought he must be.

ALFREDA. What do you mean by that?

GLEEMAN. Oh, nothing—nothing.

EDRED [*pointing off, R.*]. Look! They're coming across!

THANE [*shouting—off stage*]. One at a time, and tread lightly. Take care, there! You, Beowulf—if you want to keep your great carcass out of the swamp!

[*The shouts of the MEN crossing over the causeway of brushwood draw nearer.*]

ALFREDA. You see? They're getting over quite easily. It only needed brains.

EDRED. And brushwood. There isn't any on this side.

ALFREDA. You *would* try to make excuses.

[*The* THANE, ÆTHELSTAN, *enters followed by his* MEN.

THANE. Who are you?

EDRED. A free man, my lord Æthelstan.

THANE. Where do you live?

EDRED. I don't live anywhere now. I used to live there—where the smoke is.

THANE. The Danes?

EDRED. Yes.

ALFREDA. They burnt the house, and this poor fool did nothing to prevent them.

THANE. Are you this man's wife?

ALFREDA. Yes, more's the pity.

THANE. Then hold your tongue when your lord and master speaks.

ALFREDA. Well, of all the——

ÆELFRITH. *I* should have fought them.

THANE. Who is this young cockerel?

EDRED. That's my son, my lord Æthelstan—*our* son, I should say.

THANE. So you would fight, eh?

ÆELFRITH. I would fight the Danes while there was a breath in my body!

THANE. And so you shall.

ÆELFRITH [*eagerly*]. You mean——?

THANE. You shall come along with me.

EDRED. He's a bit young for fighting, my lord.

THANE. He's neither too young nor too old. You shall both come.

ALFREDA. My lord Æthelstan——

THANE. Hold your peace, woman. Am I to listen to the chattering tongues of women when there's men's work to be done! You have a sword—you?

EDRED. Yes, my lord. But I was never much good with it.

THANE. Then you'd better learn, and quickly. Give this young bantling a spear. [*To the GLEEMAN*] Who are you?

GLEEMAN. I'm a Gleeman, my lord. I sang in your lordship's steading two nights ago.

THANE. I remember. Your singing was bad. Where are you going?

GLEEMAN. To the Danish camp, my lord.

[*Several MEN shout "A spy!" "He is a spy!" "Let us kill him!" "He will warn the Danes!" etc.*]

THANE. Keep silence! Why were you going to the Danish camp?

GLEEMAN. To sing before the Danish leaders, my lord. You see, my lord, a Gleeman's welcome on both sides.

THANE. That's true. Hear me, fellow. You shall make what speed you can to the Danish camp, pass among the Danish fighting men, and come back to me here. Bring me word how many there are.

GLEEMAN. My lord, how can I come back? They won't let me—not when they hear my singing.

THANE. Do as I tell you, or by the Christian God there will be a Gleeman the less to disturb the peace of this earth.

GLEEMAN [*frightened*]. I'll do what I can, my lord.

THANE. One further word—don't sing in the Danish camp.

GLEEMAN. Why not, my lord?

THANE. The Danes may not have much ear for music, but they'd be certain to cut *your* throat. Go on—off with you.

[*The GLEEMAN goes off L.*]

ÆLFRITH. My lord.

THANE. What is it, boy?

ÆLFRITH. I can hurl a heavier spear than this. This is too light.

THANE. Well said! You shall take your choice. What is your name?

ALFREDA. His name is Ælfrith, my lord Thane. So named after——

THANE. Take that woman away!

ALFREDA [*protesting*]. My lord——!

THANE. If she speaks again, throw her into the swamp. And you, fellow, how comes it that your wife does not know how to bear herself more discreetly?

EDRED. It's her nature, my lord.

THANE. A man who is so little able to rule his wife is not likely to prove much of a fighter against the Danes.

EDRED. You're wrong there, my lord Æthelstan. A few Danes don't worry a man much, when he's lived with a tongue like hers for twenty years.

SAXON [*looking off L.*]. There's a man running hard along the road towards us, my lord.

THANE. The Gleeman? So soon?

SAXON. No. It's a monk, my lord.

MONK. It's Brother Francis! Praise be to God, he has escaped the fury of the Danes!

[BROTHER FRANCIS, *another* MONK, *enters breathlessly*.

EDRED. What—Brother Francis, who was burying the gold ornaments from the altar?

FRANCIS [*indignantly*]. Burying the gold ornaments from the altar? I? Would that they had been there to bury.

THANE. Did the Danes take them?

FRANCIS. The Danes weren't quick enough, my lord. This false monk has them under his cassock.

MONK. It's not true! May the Lord forgive you, Brother Francis.

FRANCIS. The Father Abbot will not forgive *you*!

MONK. The Father Abbot is dead.

FRANCIS. That is where you're wrong, Brother Gregory. The Father Abbot has made his peace with the Danes, and sworn to pay them a thousand pieces of gold on one condition.

MONK. What condition?

FRANCIS. That they bring you back to him, dead or alive.

[The MONK suddenly tries to rush off R. He is seized by the SAXONS.]

THANE. Bring him here.

MONK *[terrified]*. My lord Thane, it's not true. I am a peaceful monk. I would rather go on my way. Bid these fellows not to lay sacrilegious hands upon a son of Holy Church.

THANE. Search him!

[The SAXONS search the MONK and find some gold altar-vessels hidden under his cassock.]

SAXON. Here they are, my lord. Like a trick by the jugglers that come from over-seas.

THANE. What has Holy Church to say now?

MONK. It is true I had the ornaments from the altar, my lord, but I took them away to save them from the hands of the Danes *[spitefully]* and from Brother Francis.

FRANCIS. From *me*! I never had a chance to lay hands on them. When *I* got there, they'd gone.

MONK. You disgrace to Holy Church——!

FRANCIS. You thieving rat!

THANE. Away with the two of them! Throw them into the swamp!

[The SAXONS drag the two MONKS off R.]

MONK. The gold ornaments for the altar, my lord——?

THANE. They won't fall into the hands of the Danes. I promise you that.

[A PACKMAN runs in L.]

PACKMAN *[breathlessly]*. My lord! Help, my lord! Save me! Protection, my lord—— I claim protection.

THANE. More traffic on the highway. Who are you?

PACKMAN. I am a packman—a travelling packman, my lord. The Danes have taken my wares from me. Three pieces of good woollen cloth and my green beads and my silver spoon. It was really mine, my lord.

THANE. If you mention your silver spoon again—which

I have no doubt was stolen—my men shall run a wooden one down your throat to keep you quiet. Can you fight?

PACKMAN. No, my lord. I'm a packman, not a fighting man.

THANE. If you saw the rascal who took your silver spoon from you, what would you do?

PACKMAN. Run, my lord—as fast as I could.

THANE. Give him a spear, and if he shows any disinclination for the battle, prick him forward with your sword-points.

[*The GLEEMAN enters L.*]

SAXON. Here's the Gleeman, my lord.

THANE. Well, fellow?

GLEEMAN. There are only three score Danes, my lord. They're burning the village.

THANE. Only three score? Then we'll take them before others come to help them. Out your swords, men, and follow!

EDRED [*in a low voice, to the GLEEMAN*]. Did you see my pig?

GLEEMAN. I smelt it—roasting.

THANE [*shouting*]. Come! You—and you——!

ÆLFRITH. I'm ready.

EDRED. I'm not—but it doesn't matter. I'll come.

THANE. You, Baldric—take a score of men and go round westward. Encircle the far end of the village, and when you hear us fall upon the Danes, make a sudden sally from out of the woods and take them——

[*The THANE goes off L. followed by his MEN, EDRED, and ÆLFRITH. ALFREDA and the GLEEMAN remain.*]

ALFREDA. Have they gone?

GLEEMAN. Yes.

ALFREDA. You're not going with them?

GLEEMAN. I don't mind singing to Danes, but if there's any fighting to be done, I'm keeping out of it.

ALFREDA [*bitterly*]. That Thane—Lord Æthelstan,

they call him—if he'd said another word to *me*, he'd have been sorry for it.

GLEEMAN. Save that sort of talk for your husband. Are you coming, mother?

ALFREDA. Who are you calling mother?

GLEEMAN. I'm going across the swamp and along the road. I don't know where it leads to, but it goes westward, and that's good enough for me. Are you coming?

ALFREDA. No.

GLEEMAN. Where are you going?

ALFREDA. Back there. If you think I'm going to let my husband make a fool of himself, fighting Danes, you're mistaken. They'd laugh at him. He's a poor thing, heaven knows, but he's mine, and I won't have him laughed at by Danes.

GLEEMAN. Well, good luck to you, and to him, if you find him again—poor fellow!

[He goes off R. and ALFREDA goes off L. After a moment the MONK crawls in, wet and with weeds trailing from his head and shoulders.]

MONK. Brother Francis!

[BROTHER FRANCIS crawls in, also wet and trailing weeds.]

FRANCIS. Is that you, Brother Gregory?

MONK. Yes. Where have you been, Brother Francis?

FRANCIS. In the swamp. Where have you been?

MONK. In the swamp. Brother Francis?

FRANCIS. What is it, Brother Gregory?

MONK. You'd have taken them if you'd had the chance, wouldn't you?

FRANCIS. Yes.

MONK. Now we've neither of us got them.

FRANCIS. No.

MONK. What are we going to do?

FRANCIS. There are other monasteries. Follow the road, and we'll come to one sooner or later.

MONK. We'll go together. Brother Francis?

FRANCIS. What is it?

MONK. Could you sing a psalm? It would help us on our way.

FRANCIS [*scornfully*]. A *psalm*! What about that stave Brother Ambrose used to sing? [*Singing very dolefully*]:

Three jolly monks sat down to dine.

[*The MONK joins in.*

Each with a flagon of good red wine.

Three jolly monks,

Three jolly monks,

Three jolly monks,

Three jolly monks sat down to dine.

[*They go out R. together.*

CURTAIN

THE MAID OF DOMIRÉMY

By JOE CORRIE

CHARACTERS

JACQUES D'ARC, *a peasant farmer*

ROMÉE D'ARC, *his wife*

JEANNE D'ARC, *their daughter*

PIERRE D'ARC, *their son*

SIMON MUSNIER, *a neighbour*

MARIE MUSNIER, *his wife*

THE CURÉ

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THE MAID OF DOMRÉMY¹

The scene of the play is the living-room of JACQUES D'ARC, a peasant farmer of Lorraine, in France.

The year is 1429, on an evening in early spring. The pastures are fresh and green, flowers bloom once more, and the birds sing gladly round the village of Domrémy, despite the fact that France is having troublesome times. The English Duke of Bedford is Regent of France, and the French nobles are at variance with one another. The French Dauphin, Charles, wears not the crown of King: he is weak by nature and powerless by circumstance. And so France suffers. Nobles that once were friends are now enemies, and the people take sides with their masters. So guerrilla warfare is common, with its local skirmishes and raids on cattle and property. But there is a stillness this evening like the lull before an approaching storm, as if the very gladness of Nature has shamed mankind to peace.

The sun shines through the window in the back wall; and through the open door that leads out to the roads and pastures of Lorraine comes the chorus of the birds.

The room is simply furnished, but not meanly so. JACQUES D'ARC, although a peasant farmer, is not exactly poverty-stricken. True, there is a carefulness of living, but no deep anxiety at the moment. The room is clean, and rather cool and inviting, and the floor, instead of being earthen, as is the rule in the district, is flagged.

¹ Application regarding amateur performances of this play should be addressed to Messrs J. B. Pinker and Son, Talbot House, Arundel Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

The evening is rather warm, and the fire is low in the grate.

JEANNE D'ARC, a girl of between seventeen and eighteen years of age, strongly built, and with a mass of ginger hair, sits rocking a cradle. She sings a little folk-song as she rocks, and her big blue eyes are lit with dreams that we know little of. She looks beautiful, even although her face is much freckled. Her bare legs and feet are brown with the sun and the winds, and her attitude, even sitting there, betokens a girl of fearlessness and action. The low sun rises over a cloud and shines through the window on to her head.

Then her brother PIERRE enters. He is the opposite of JEANNE in every way. He is sallow of face, round-shouldered slightly, his trousers and blouse seeming to hang loosely and ungracefully on his body. He wears shoes, too, and walks in an attitude of fear. He looks at JEANNE for a moment or two, as if he were afraid to speak to her.

JEANNE looks up from her dreaming and sees him.

JEANNE. What is it, Pierre?

PIERRE [*after a pause, and approaching nearer to her*]. Jeanne, I'll rock the baby if you'll go and milk Praline.

JEANNE. Why should I milk Praline, Pierre? That is your task.

PIERRE [*after a little shiver*]. She kicks! I am afraid of her.

JEANNE [*not bitterly, as she might well be*]. Afraid of her? You, a man grown, afraid of a cow because she kicks? What is going to happen to you, brother Pierre? [*He turns his face away from her.*] You're afraid to milk Praline. You're afraid to ride on the donkey. You're afraid to cross the river at the stepping-stones. You're afraid to shout names to the Burgundians of Maxey. You're afraid to join the Domrémy boys when they go fighting the Maxey boys over the river. . . . You hide when

you see a Goddam of an English soldier coming. You're ready to cry when Father speaks sharply to you, and you cannot sleep when Mother speaks angrily. You're afraid of every little thing, Pierre.

PIERRE [*without turning; piteously*]. I know! I know! But I cannot help it. [*Turning*] I'm just as God made me.)

JEANNE [*sadly*]. I have had to shelter you ever since I can remember, Pierre.

PIERRE. God made you without fear.

JEANNE. God made me no better than any other girl. It is doing *your* work that has made me strong. Why don't you try hard to be a man, Pierre? You are a year older than me, you know, and yet you look just like a boy.

PIERRE [*pleading*]. Go and milk Praline, Jeanne. If Father knows she hasn't been milked yet he will be angry with me. [*JEANNE considers for a moment.*]

JEANNE. No, I *won't* milk her. I am only encouraging you and making you worse.

[*She sings again to the child. PIERRE is in a miserable state, and glances furtively towards the door.*]

PIERRE. But she'll kick! She'll spill the milk! She may kick me and *kill* me! Jeanne, I can't!

JEANNE. Pierre, you make me feel angry with you at times. Always that whimper and these tears. Why don't you make up your mind to fight your fears? Other boys are bold enough. Why aren't you?

PIERRE [*exhausted*]. I was just born as I am, and will never be anything else.

[*JEANNE is sorry for him. She rises and holds his hands in hers.*]

JEANNE. You could be, Pierre, if you tried hard enough.

PIERRE. I'm not strong. I'm ill.

JEANNE. Your body isn't strong because your mind is weak. If you were to say "*I will* milk Praline!" and did it once—just once, Pierre—you would be a different boy.

[*She squeezes his hands in her effort to arouse him.*]

PIERRE. Jeanne, you are hurting my hands!

[She lets go her hold.]

JEANNE. Pierre, you are hopeless. *[She looks so strong now, standing at her full height, compared with PIERRE, who is limp, with his head hanging.]* You should have been me, and I should have been you. But I do the boy's work, and you do the girl's. You sit and rock the cradle, while I go and milk the cow that kicks. You clean the shoes, while I go into Domrémy on the donkey. You make the beds, while I kill the cockerel for Sunday's dinner. You shelter behind a hedge, while I bring the swine in from the field. Even when I was much smaller than you and we used to fight the Maxey children, you used to hide while we stoned them and chased them. Then you say I am strong. I have had to be, Pierre, to make up for your weakness.

PIERRE. No, no! You were born strong by God, and I was born weak.

JEANNE. Do not blame God, Pierre! Put your trust in Him, and you will grow stronger.

[Again we see the contrast between the two, for JEANNE has raised her eyes to heaven and is standing at her full height.]

PIERRE. I *have* tried to put my trust in God, Jeanne. I have prayed and prayed, but He never hears me.

JEANNE. Because you have no faith. You cannot fool God, brother. Give yourself wholly to Him, and He will send His saints to help you.

PIERRE. God only sends His saints to girls. I don't think He loves boys.

JEANNE *[sadly]*. Always excuses. Always blaming some one else, never yourself. Oh, Pierre! And France needs men that are strong and brave. France will never have peace till the English are driven away. And when will that ever be if you are the kind of boy she is depending on?

PIERRE. The English will never be driven from France. It is God's will that they are here.

JEANNE. Has God not given them a country of their own?

PIERRE. Go and milk the cow, Jeanne.

JEANNE. And wouldn't you like to chase them back to their own country some day?

PIERRE. God has said that He will send a saint one day to send them home.

JEANNE. You have heard Father tell that story so often, Pierre. But you know she may not come yet for years.

PIERRE. Father says it will come to pass some day soon. Go and milk the cow, Jeanne.

JEANNE. Very well, I'll do it once more. But you will try it yourself to-morrow, won't you?

PIERRE. Yes, yes!

JEANNE. You will pray hard to-night?

PIERRE. Yes! Hurry, Jeanne, before Father comes home.

JEANNE. Rock the cradle, then.

[He goes gladly to the cradle, and begins rocking it.]

JEANNE looks down on him.

PIERRE *[looking up ashamedly]*. If I had voices speaking to me I would——

JEANNE *[interrupting him angrily]*. Do not speak about my voices! You do not understand. *[He hangs his head.]*

JEANNE *[dreamily]*. My voices! . . . Ah!

[She goes outside proudly and gladly. PIERRE watches her go with a bit of a sneer on his lips.]

PIERRE *[unkindly]*. It's your voices that make you brave, not you!

[There is a pause, then ROMÉE enters. She is a typical peasant-woman of forty-five or so, plainly dressed in her everyday clothes.]

ROMÉE. Where is Jeanne, Pierre?

PIERRE. I don't know, Mother. She asked me to rock the cradle, then she went out.

[ROMÉE looks closely at PIERRE.]

ROMÉE. Have you been crying? My poor boy, what is the matter with you?

PIERRE. I'm not well, Mother.

ROMÉE [*concerned*]. What is it, Pierre?

PIERRE [*holding his stomach*]. A pain here, Mother.

ROMÉE [*sympathetically*]. Something you have eaten? I don't think you should have eggs. I will not give you any more. Yesterday you had a sore head, the day before yesterday you had a backache, and to-day you have a sore belly. I wish I knew what was wrong with you, poor boy. Perhaps you have to work too hard now that your brothers are both away working for others. I told your father that he ought to have kept one of them at home. But your father must always have his own way. I will see to Baby, Pierre. You get into bed and have a little rest. [*He rises. ROMÉE pats his head fondly.*] Poor boy! And Jeanne is so strong.

PIERRE [*angrily*]. It's her voices that make *her* strong.

ROMÉE [*huskily, and disturbed*]. Pierre! Pierre! Don't talk about these voices! If the Curé was to hear of Jeanne and her voices he might—— Oh, I don't know what he might do! I wish she would get them out of her head, for I can see trouble in front of us if she doesn't. She is so headstrong at times, and has no caution. Women have been burned at the stake as being witches for the same kind of thing. Do not speak about them outside, Pierre. Now go to bed, and try to get a little sleep.

PIERRE. If the Curé comes you won't tell him I am ill, Mother?

ROMÉE. No, Pierre, I won't disturb you. Poor boy!

[*PIERRE goes off to the bedroom, which is reached through the door at the left front. ROMÉE watches him go sympathetically. Then sits at cradle and begins to rock it, humming the same little song that JEANNE sang.*

[*There is a pause, then JACQUES enters from outside. He is a strong-looking man of fifty, yet bears that look of simplicity and faith which is typical of*

the peasantry—hope and trust and belief. He looks kindly and homely.

JACQUES. Where is Pierre, Mother?

ROMÉE. I have just sent him to bed, Jacques. Poor boy, he has a sore belly.

JACQUES [*frowning*]. There is always something wrong with him, Romée.

ROMÉE. The poor boy cannot help complaining, Jacques. He is not too strong. Do not be unkind to him.

JACQUES. I'm not unkind, Romée, but I am troubled over him. He has so many different pains, and I cannot help but notice that Jeanne does too much of his work. She is doing it to-night again.

ROMÉE. Where is she?

JACQUES. In the milking-shed.

[ROMÉE *looks towards the bedroom, worried.*

ROMÉE. What is she doing?

JACQUES. Milking Praline. [ROMÉE *rises suddenly.*

ROMÉE. It will kick her to death, Jacques!

JACQUES [*putting his hand on her shoulder to keep her from going out*]. Leave her alone with it, Romée. She is not afraid, and it doesn't do to put fear in a child.

ROMÉE [*greatly disturbed*]. But it goes mad at times. . . . Get her away from it, Jacques!

JACQUES. Jeanne is safe enough, Mother. [*Persuading her to sit*] She is all right. She doesn't know what fear is. No matter whom I meet in the village now, they speak of her.

ROMÉE [*quietly and anxiously*]. What are they saying about her?

JACQUES. No ill, Romée, no ill. She is well liked by every one. She casts a spell over them. [*With a smile.*] Over the lads, too, that they cannot look her straight in the face.

ROMÉE. Yes, yes! But what do they say about her?

JACQUES. Well, one told me she was a saint of a girl.

One said she was a witch—she had slapped him on the face for using a bad word. *[He laughs quietly.]*

ROMÉE. Jacques, don't you think you should speak to the Curé about her—about these voices? I used to think it was only the silly dream of a silly girl, but she has been speaking about them now for five years. Will the Curé be passing by to-night?

JACQUES. Yes, he may be. He is in the village just now.

ROMÉE. You will call him in and speak to him, Jacques?

JACQUES. But what can I say to him, Romée? Jeanne is doing no ill. Perhaps it is the real voice of the saint she hears.

ROMÉE. Jacques, how can you say that? You know how dangerous it is. Don't you see how she would be questioned? And if it was found out that she was lying? Oh, you know what would happen.

JACQUES *[after a slight pause]*. I am afraid to interfere, Romée.

ROMÉE. Afraid! Why?

JACQUES. I cannot say. I *have* tried to approach the Curé about her, but something always keeps me back. That old story about the Maid who is to come from Lorraine to free France keeps——

ROMÉE. Foolish! Foolish! Foolish! You must do something! You *must*!

JACQUES. But, Romée, if God is willing it?

ROMÉE. God will not come to her aid were she to be questioned!

JACQUES. You have little faith, Romée.

ROMÉE. It is not that, Jacques. You know how the Church. . . .

JACQUES. I know. *[Thoughtfully]* If we had a King, Romée, a real King. . . . *[JEANNE enters, but stands in doorway, unseen by her parents.]* But he is wasting away his time and his life doing nothing but sinning. The whole of his Court, they tell me, is corrupt. And poor

France being torn to death between those who wish for England and those who wish for France. Fighting and killing and raiding and destroying, and we should all be living in God's peace. . . . If voices would only come to *him*, Romée!

ROMÉE. How often have you said that, Jacques? So often that Jeanne has *cried* over France. Why should you trouble your head about it? We are comfortable enough, and have lost nothing so far but a few sheep.

JACQUES. It is the days to come that trouble me, Romée. I can see our country overrun by the English.

ROMÉE. God will see that that never happens.

JACQUES. I know He will; that is why the Maid is to come. She is to drive the English away.

ROMÉE. Oh, I am tired of hearing that story from you! It's little wonder that Jeanne is a dreamer; her father has given them all to her. And since the Domrémy people sent you to speak to the Squire she looks up in your face as if you were now the Squire himself.

JACQUES. That reminds me that Simon and Marie are coming in on their way home from the village. He is anxious to hear about the visit. My tongue is sore these days retelling the story. And I have to give an answer to *every* question.

ROMÉE. Whether there is an answer or not?

JACQUES [*smiling*]. Whether there is an answer or not, Romée.

[JEANNE *now enters*.]

ROMÉE. You shouldn't milk that cow, girl. Some day it will kick and kill you.

JEANNE. I am not afraid of it, Mother.

ROMÉE. I would be happier if I knew you *had* some fear. When one has fear they are careful.

JEANNE. When one has fear they have no faith in God. God protects the fearless, but He despises the cowardly. With Him beside me I am free from all harm. Am I not, Father?

JACQUES. You should be, Jeanne.

ROMÉE. Don't talk so foolishly, Jacques!

JEANNE. It is not foolish, Mother. God *does* love me. Doesn't He protect my sheep from the wolves? We haven't lost a single sheep to the wolves, have we, Father?

JACQUES. Yes. People are wondering why we never lose any sheep.

JEANNE. It is because God loves me.

JACQUES. He loves us all, Jeanne.

JEANNE. Yes, but one is sometimes chosen above all others.

ROMÉE. And *you* will be that one, I suppose?

JEANNE. Yes, Mother. [ROMÉE rises.

ROMÉE. You will have to speak to the Curé about her, Jacques. *Have to!* I will go and see if my poor boy is asleep.

[ROMÉE goes off to bedroom, after giving JEANNE a slanting look. There is a slight pause.

JACQUES. Who told you that God loves you more than anyone else, Jeanne?

JEANNE. St Margaret and St-Catherine have both told me, Father.

JACQUES [*cautiously, that ROMÉE may not hear*]. They still speak to you, then?

JEANNE. Yes; every day when I am in the meadow, and when the church-bells ring.

JACQUES. And what do they tell you, child?

JEANNE. They keep telling me that I should save France.

JACQUES. Yes; but how? Have they not told you that?

JEANNE. Not yet, Father. They keep telling me to be good and brave and kind, and some day they will tell me what to do.

JACQUES. Have you *seen* St Margaret and St Catherine?

JEANNE. Yes. St Catherine has fair hair and St Margaret has dark hair. And, Father, they are both so beautiful!

JACQUES. Yes, yes! But are you sure they haven't told you why they have chosen to speak to you, and not to others?

JEANNE. Once St Margaret said that some day I might be sent by them to the Dauphin.

JACQUES. The Dauphin?

JEANNE. Yes, to wash his heart clean with the waters of heaven, and make him brave and noble and upright and——

JACQUES. My child, should the Curé ask questions of you, you must not tell him that.

JEANNE. Why, Father?

JACQUES. Because he might not believe you; might misunderstand you, and—you would be in danger. You must not tell him about your *voices*.

JEANNE. How could I tell the Curé a lie, Father?

JACQUES [*greatly perturbed now*]. You must not pay any more attention to your voices, Jeanne. It is too dangerous.

JEANNE. But it is God speaking to me through His saints.

JACQUES. I know, child, I know; but if the Curé asks questions you must be careful. The Church is jealous. You have only to pray and let the voices be heard by the Curé.

JEANNE. God will make the Curé understand.

JACQUES. Oh, you will condemn yourself with your own foolish words! [ROMÉE enters.]

ROMÉE. Jacques, the Curé is coming up the path to our house.

[JACQUES is greatly disturbed. ROMÉE looks anxiously at JEANNE. JEANNE stands serene and calm and quiet, as if asking God for His advice and aid.]

[To JEANNE] Get out of the room, and he will not know you are here.

JEANNE. I have faith, Mother.

JACQUES. Jeanne, girl, it is better that he should not get the chance of speaking to you to-night. You would betray

yourself some way or another. [*To ROMÉE*] He will be coming to ask about our health only?

JEANNE. No; he is coming to question me, Father.

JACQUES. How do you know?

JEANNE. My voices have told me that he will come.

ROMÉE. Jacques! Jacques! He mustn't!

JACQUES. If it is to be, Romée.

ROMÉE. Oh!

[She is in great distress, but braces herself when the knock comes to the door, and the CURÉ enters. He is a fairly young man in the curé's garb, kindly, just, and fatherly, yet with a restless look in his eyes which may be for the safety of God or the safety of France.]

CURÉ. God save all here!

OTHERS. Amen!

CURÉ [*after a slight pause, during which he has glanced at JEANNE*]. I wish to speak to Jeanne, Jacques.

[JACQUES, ROMÉE, and JEANNE herself all give a slight start.]

JACQUES. Yes, Monsieur le Curé. Alone?

CURÉ. By your leave, Jacques.

JACQUES [*to ROMÉE*]. We will go into the garden, Romée.

[They both look at JEANNE for a moment, then go outside slowly.]

CURÉ. Sit down, my child. [*JEANNE sits by cradle. The CURÉ looks down on her in a kindly way; then he, too, sits.*] I am your Curé and counsellor. Be not afraid.

JEANNE. I am never afraid, Monsieur le Curé. God tells me not to be afraid.

CURÉ. How does He tell you, my child?

JEANNE. He speaks to my heart, monsieur.

CURÉ. When you pray to Him?

JEANNE. Yes.

CURÉ. Does He ever answer in any other way?

JEANNE. Yes.

CURÉ. How?

JEANNE. He has given me strength, so that I need not be afraid, monsieur, and——

CURÉ. Yes; do not hesitate, my child.

JEANNE. He protects my sheep from the wolves.

CURÉ. I have heard so.

JEANNE. And He tells the birds not to be afraid of me, and they feed from my hand.

CURÉ. Yes, I have heard so also. [*A pause.*] My child, I ask you if you ever commune with evil spirits?

JEANNE [*definitely*]. No, monsieur.

CURÉ. While other girls play by the riverside you kneel in the shade and pray?

JEANNE. I often do so, monsieur.

CURÉ. You pray only to God?

JEANNE. Yes.

CURÉ. What for, my child?

JEANNE. To keep me strong, and faithful, and brave. }

CURÉ. Yes, child. What for?

JEANNE. For France, monsieur. [*The CURÉ is startled.* }

CURÉ. France! [*Collecting himself*] Why for France, my dear?

JEANNE. That I may do something *for* France; that I may—— }

CURÉ. Yes, child?

JEANNE. That it may be a good country—and pure—and free from fighting and thieving, and—sin. }

CURÉ. Yes; but how can you do this, child?

JEANNE. By serving God, monsieur.

CURÉ. You are very young to take life so seriously. You are quite sure you are listening only to God?

JEANNE. Yes, monsieur.

CURÉ. You swear that, my child?

JEANNE. Yes, monsieur.

[*The CURÉ looks her straight in the eyes. JEANNE does not flinch. The CURÉ rises, satisfied.*]

CURÉ. Tell your father I wish to speak to him, Jeanne.

JEANNE. Yes, monsieur.

[*She rises and goes off. The CURÉ watches her go, a little perplexed. He looks into the cradle and smiles. JACQUES enters.*

CURÉ. I have been questioning Jeanne, Jacques.

JACQUES [*concerned*]. Yes, monsieur?

CURÉ. People are talking of her in the village, and strange stories are going round. Why, they ask me, do her sheep never get devoured by the wolves? Why is she able to lure the birds to her hand? Why does she keep praying for the welfare of this one and the health of that one, making them believe that they will get consolation and strength from her prayers?

JACQUES. There is no evil in her, monsieur.

CURÉ. No, Jacques. She is only a little too devout for her years; but there is no cause for anxiety. I have questioned her very carefully, and she answered me well.

JACQUES. I am glad you say that, monsieur.

CURÉ. Were you doubting her, then?

JACQUES. No, monsieur, but it is so easy to be misunderstood.

CURÉ. Yes, Jacques, but you need have no fears. Jeanne is a good girl. I am sure of that. [*Outside can be heard the voices of groups of children quarrelling.*] What noise is that, Jacques?

JACQUES. It is the Domrémy children and the Maxey children over the river fighting again, monsieur.

[*The CURÉ opens the window and looks out.*

CURÉ. Even the children cannot agree. Jacques, I wonder when France will ever be saved? [*The Domrémy children can be heard shouting, "Vive la France!" Forgetting himself for the moment*] Vive la France! [*Then he shuts the window and looks round to JACQUES, a little ashamed.*] I should not encourage the children to fight,

should I? But France, Jacques. . . . France! . . . [*A pause.*]
Good night. [*He goes out, still feeling ashamed.*]

JACQUES [*after he has gone*]. France, monsieur. . . .
France. . . . [*ROMÉE enters, pale.*]

ROMÉE. Did he discover, Jacques . . . ?

JACQUES. He says she is a true daughter of God, Romeé.

ROMÉE. But did she tell him about these voices?

JACQUES. Jeanne does not lie, Romeé. He says she is a good girl.

ROMÉE. Oh, I am glad! [*She sits by cradle.*] But does it mean that she must still listen to these voices?

JACQUES. The Curé says she is without fault.

ROMÉE. I wonder?

JACQUES. Surely you do not dispute *his* judgment, Romeé?

ROMÉE. I am her mother, Jacques, and I have fears.
[*JEANNE enters.*] Jeanne, did you tell the Curé the truth?

JEANNE. I never tell lies, Mother.

ROMÉE. Did you tell him all?

JEANNE. I answered all his questions truthfully. [*The sound of the children is heard again. Enthusiastically*] The Curé shouted, "Vive la France!" The Burgundians *are* traitors to France, Father?

JACQUES. Some day we will all be friends and at peace, Jeanne.

JEANNE. You mean, when the Maid comes? She will go to the Dauphin and plead with him?

ROMÉE. It is only a story about that Maid. There is no maid ever so foolish as to go and plead with a king.

JEANNE. But Father has told me——

ROMÉE [*interrupting*]. Your father is more fool than you are.

JACQUES. Do not mention it again, Jeanne. [*There is a pause. Then MARIE and SIMON knock on the door and enter. They are a middle-aged couple, dressed neatly in their home*

clothes.] Ah, good evening, Marie! Good evening, Simon!

[They bid one another good evening. MARIE goes to the cradle and looks down on the child.]

MARIE. God bless you, little child! How sweet she looks! *[Sighs. To ROMÉE]* How I love children, and yet the Lord is never going to bless me with a child.

JEANNE. I will pray for you, Marie, and you will be given a child.

ROMÉE. Jeanne, hold your tongue!

MARIE. I have prayed till my heart is sore, but God doesn't hear me.

JEANNE. He *does* hear, Marie, but——

JACQUES. Jeanne, go and see that the swine are in the pen.

[JEANNE is about to go when the Angelus-bell rings in the distant church. They all stand with bowed heads. But MARIE cannot help but cast her eyes on JEANNE, who is trembling, and listening hard and joyfully.]

MARIE *[dreamily]*. Blessed art thou among women. . . .

JEANNE. I will pray for you, Marie. *[JEANNE goes out.]*

JACQUES. Be seated, Marie. And you, too, Simon.

[They both sit.]

MARIE. Aren't Jeanne's freckles lovely?

ROMÉE. Lovely, Marie?

MARIE. Yes. All the other girls with freckles seem plain, but Jeanne is beautiful.

SIMON. I have noticed that, too, Marie.

MARIE. And how strong she is, too. Oh, I wish I had a daughter like Jeanne, Romée. *[To JACQUES]* But hasn't she become so wise and devout lately? And I can remember when she was as wild as any boy. You remember that day, Simon—the day we saw her lead the Domrémy boys against the Maxey boys over the river? *[To ROMÉE]* Ay, there she was, Romée, throwing stones with the best of them and leading on her army, shouting, "Vive la France!"

Vive la France!" her red hair waving in the wind like an unsheltered part of a cornfield at red sunset. But now she is so quiet, and always praying, it seems.

SIMON. Did you tell Romée about our cow, Marie?

MARIE. Did I ever tell you about Jeanne getting the milk back to our cow?

ROMÉE [*after a troubled glance at JACQUES*]. No. What was it?

MARIE. Oh, our cow stole into the meal-shed one day and ate its fill—stole so much of the meal that it lost its milk. [*To JACQUES*] Oh, I was worried over that, Jacques, for you know that when a cow loses its milk like that it may be weeks before it comes back again. [*To ROMÉE*] Jeanne was passing by that day, and I told her about it. "Don't worry, Marie," she said. "I will pray." And the next morning the cow was giving its milk as if nothing had happened to it!

SIMON. Yes, Jacques, as if nothing had happened to it. It was a miracle.

JACQUES [*smiling, but to hide his concern*]. But cows have been known to lose their milk and get it back again in a day, Simon.

MARIE. Yes, Jacques, but not cows like ours. And you cannot deny that the wolves never eat *your* sheep.

JACQUES. That is just good fortune, Marie. It has nothing to do with Jeanne.

MARIE. And I have seen with my own eyes the birds eating from her hand.

JACQUES [*still smiling*]. Only when they were *very* hungry, Marie.

SIMON. But, Jacques, there are a score of people in Domrémy who could tell you of Jeanne and her prayers and her——

JACQUES. Sh, Simon! I can hear her coming.

[JEANNE enters.]

SIMON [*to change the conversation, though MARIE cannot*]

keep her eyes off JEANNE]. Now, Jacques, you must tell me about your visit to the Squire at Vaucouleurs.

[JEANNE *sits, looking at her father proudly.*

JACQUES. What can I tell you that you do not already know, Simon?

SIMON. He could not promise us any soldiers to protect our cattle and sheep from these Burgundian robbers and thieves? [*Bitterly*] How I hate them!

JEANNE [*sweetly, yet sadly*]. You should not hate them, Simon. They are your brothers.

SIMON. Brothers! Yet they rob and plunder our farms whenever they get the chance.

MARIE. Don't we do the same on their farms when *we* get the chance, Simon?

SIMON. Of course we do, to get our own back. They began it.

MARIE. No, Simon, the English began it. We lived in peace till they came. But Burgundy now sides with the English, and Lorraine remains true to France. So it is that the French can hate the French.

SIMON. Of course you will be right, Marie. [*To JEANNE*] Would you call the English our brothers, too, Jeanne?

JEANNE. No; they are invaders, Simon. They are our brothers in the eyes of God when they are in their own country, but not when they are in ours. God gave us all a country to live in, and be at peace with one another.

MARIE. It is strange to me how a young girl can talk like that.

ROMÉE. There is nothing strange in it. It's what she hears her father say time and time again.

JEANNE. No. St Margaret——

ROMÉE [*interrupting*]. Come and rock this cradle. [*ROMÉE rises.*] Girls know too much these days. [*JEANNE rises and goes to the cradle.*] I must go and see how Pierre

is. [*To JACQUES*] And don't let her come out with any more of that foolish talk. [*ROMÉE goes off L.*]

SIMON. It doesn't seem human that the English should be our brothers. Surely we think more of ourselves than that, Jacques.

JACQUES. I think Jeanne is right, Simon.

JEANNE. God has told me, and He is never wrong, Father.

MARIE. Does God tell you things, Jeanne?

JEANNE. Yes.

MARIE. Speaks to you?

JEANNE. Yes.

MARIE. But why doesn't He speak to us all?

JEANNE. Because you have not enough faith.

SIMON. I go to church as often as any man could, Jeanne, yet God never speaks to me.

JEANNE. Going to church alone does not bring faith, }
Simon. God was in heaven before there was such a thing }
as a church.

MARIE [*smiling*]. She is too wise for *you*, Simon.

SIMON [*to JEANNE*]. Do you ever see the fairies?

JEANNE. Yes, Simon.

SIMON. Are they like children?

JEANNE. No; they are like angels.

SIMON. And do they speak to you?

JEANNE. Yes.

SIMON. As I'm speaking to you just now?

JEANNE. Yes, but they speak sense, Simon.

[*MARIE laughs heartily. JACQUES smiles, rather proud of JEANNE.*]

MARIE. You are no match for her, Simon. You had better rest your tongue.

SIMON [*to JEANNE*]. It is said that you sometimes speak to the saints.

[*A pause, during which JACQUES is uneasy. ROMÉE enters.*]

ROMÉE. The dusk is beginning to fall now.

SIMON [*to JEANNE*]. People are laughing at you over some things, Jeanne.

JEANNE. I have been told that people *will* laugh at me, that they will even get *angry* with me. But *I* have not to get angry. I must keep tolerant and kind.

SIMON. Yet you wish to see the English driven from France. How can they be driven out by tolerance and kindness?

JEANNE. Because God has told me, and God is never wrong.

ROMÉE. Cannot you talk of something else to-night?

SIMON [*disregarding ROMÉE*]. There is only one thing the English will ever fear, and that is the sword.

JEANNE. The fear of God is greater than the fear of the sword.

SIMON [*to JACQUES*]. Your daughter has strange views.

ROMÉE. They are her father's views, not hers.

JEANNE. They are the views of the saints, Mother.

SIMON [*rising*]. If it hadn't been that our cow got back its milk I would have just laughed at you, Jeanne, but. . . .

MARIE [*rising*]. Yes; God must have heard Jeanne then, Simon. But we must get home. [*To ROMÉE*] What is the matter with Pierre, Romée?

ROMÉE. He isn't well.

MARIE. I was remarking to Simon the other day that he didn't look strong. What are you giving him?

ROMÉE [*curtly*]. Bitter herbs; but they aren't doing him any good.

MARIE [*looking proudly at JEANNE*]. You won't have to get many bitter herbs to keep *you* well, Jeanne.

JEANNE. Have faith, and *no* one needs bitter herbs. Listen! [*They all listen.*] I thought I heard bells.

SIMON. It'll be the fairies ringing the buttercups, Jeanne. [*He laughs.*]

MARIE. I wish I could dream and see the fairies.

SIMON. The only time *you* dream, Marie, is in bed, and when you do I can hardly walk the next day with the kicking I get.

MARIE. The devil take you, Simon, for telling lies!

SIMON. The devil has a hold on a lot of us if *that* is a lie, Jacques.

JACQUES [*to ROMÉE*]. We will go to the end of the lane with Marie and Simon, Romée?

ROMÉE. Very well. [SIMON *looks out the door.*

SIMON. Look, Jacques! How strange and beautiful the hills are to-night! [JACQUES *looks out, too.*

JACQUES. Yes. They are strange as if—— [He *pauses.*

JEANNE [*dreamily*]. The hills of Lorraine.

JACQUES. The sun is gilding the crests of them with gold. I once had a dream, long, long ago, and in my dream I saw the hills as they are now. Yes, and it was the night when the Maid—— [Again he *pauses.*

JEANNE [*dreamily*]. The Maid of Lorraine?

SIMON. The Maid, Jacques?

JACQUES. Yes, the Maid that is to free France, Simon. [*Excitedly*] I tell you——

ROMÉE. Jacques, Jacques, will you say no more about that Maid? You will drive me mad!

[*For JEANNE has risen, and is standing in proud ecstasy.*

MARIE. Romée, do not upset yourself. [*She looks at JEANNE.*] Some people cannot help having strange dreams. [SIMON *takes JACQUES outside.*] Come down to the end of the lane with us, and do not trouble yourself.

ROMÉE [*looking at JEANNE*]. But I cannot help it, Marie. He is turning my girl mad with his foolish dreams and prophecies.

MARIE. Come, Romée, you are forgetting yourself.

ROMÉE [*going off with MARIE*]. I am afraid, Marie. . . . Afraid. [They go off. JEANNE *smiles.*

JEANNE. The Maid! [*She runs excitedly to the cradle and*

looks down on the child.] Catherine, you know that the saints speak to me! You know it is not a silly dream! You know what I mean when I tell you that France will yet be fair and free and proud! But when, Catherine, when will I have to go? Oh, you are so like the France that should be, sister Catherine, so full of joy, so fine, so pure, so heavenly. [Bells ring in the distance.] Listen! . . . My voices! [There is a pause. She listens, trembling with a great excitement. In great ecstasy] Yes! . . . I am listening, St Margaret. I am here! [The sun shines through the door on JEANNE, while the dusk has darkened the room. The bells are still ringing softly. JEANNE has become completely transformed, and is standing at her full height.] Yes, St Margaret I hear you. . . . The Dauphin? I go to the Dauphin? . . . He will listen to me? . . . I have to make him listen to me, for God will speak through me to him? . . . Yes? . . . To make him holy—and brave—and noble. . . . He will get strength to fight his weaknesses and follies? . . . Yes, I know he is foolish. My father has told me so. . . . Yes, I know also that he has many enemies, and is afraid of them. . . . No, I am not afraid, blessed St Margaret. You give me strength. You give me faith. You will guide me. [A pause.] But, blessed St Margaret, that is considered a sin. . . . I—I. . . . God says I must go that way? . . . Yes, I will! [PIERRE enters cautiously and stares at JEANNE.] For France? . . . Yes! . . . Yes! . . . I will. . . . Good night, blessed St Margaret. Good night. [The bells have ceased ringing, but JEANNE still stands dreaming. PIERRE gazes at her in wonderment and awe.] For France? I—can—save—my—country! I can save France!

PIERRE. Have you been hearing your voices again?

JEANNE [*coming slowly out of her dream*]. Yes. [*A pause, during which she changes in character.*] Pierre, I want your clothes.

PIERRE. My clothes!

JEANNE. Yes. St Margaret has told me that I must

wear men's clothes to-night. I have a far road to travel.

PIERRE [*afraid*]. I cannot give you my clothes.

JEANNE [*taking him by the shoulder firmly*]. I must get your clothes, Pierre. St Margaret has told me.

PIERRE. You are hurting me! You are hurting me!

[JEANNE glances towards outside door.]

JEANNE [*quickly*]. Get to bed at once, and strip off your clothes. Leave them in a bundle behind the door.

PIERRE. I won't! I won't!

JEANNE [*gripping him madly*]. I say you will! [*He faces her for a moment as if he would battle with her, but the eyes of JEANNE conquer him easily. She lets go her hold on his shoulders. He goes off to his room, whimpering. There is a pause, during which JEANNE looks all round the room.*] I must leave you, dear home. Must leave—everything. Dear father, dear mother, dear brothers, dear little sister. . . . My sheep, my cattle, my green, green pastures. . . . My beautiful hills of Lorraine. . . . My river. . . . My companions. . . . From everything I love I must go. Oh, blessed St Margaret, must I? . . . [*She is about to weep, but she gradually straightens herself.*] France means more than all these things. [*She looks at cradle, then goes quickly to it and speaks again to the child.*] Dear child, you know I must go. Ah, you are awake! Oh, smile on me, little sister. Your smile is the light of heaven! [*In tears*] Catherine, you know I cannot stay. It is God who is sending me away to save our France. [*She becomes calm.*] It is for your sake, little Catherine, for the sake of every little child in France, that ye may all grow up friends and live in peace and happiness. . . . I will always see your pretty little smiling face. [*Excitedly*] Yes, and it will help to keep me strong, for I know that St Margaret has made you smile on me to-night. [*She hears her mother and father returning. Softly*] Good-bye, little child. Good-bye, Catherine.

[JACQUES and ROMÉE enter.]

ROMÉE [*still troubled*]. Very well, Jacques. See that you tell no more of your dreams in the house. [*To JEANNE*] Is Pierre still in bed?

JEANNE. Yes, Mother; he is going to sleep now.

ROMÉE. Well, it's time you were in bed, too. To-morrow is market day, and we must all be up early.

JEANNE. Catherine is awake, Mother.

ROMÉE. I will attend to her. [*JACQUES and JEANNE exchange looks, and none of us can tell what their thoughts are.*] Did I not tell you to go to bed?

JACQUES. Good night, Jeanne.

JEANNE. Good night.

[She waits on her mother's "Good night," but ROMÉE ignores her. She goes off to her room crying, but trying to hide it. JACQUES sees her.]

ROMÉE. What's wrong with the girl? Is she crying?

JACQUES. You did not say good night.

ROMÉE. I will say good night to her when she comes to her senses. [*She lifts the child from the cradle.*] God keep you from hearing foolish tales, my dear. [*To JACQUES*] Don't be late in getting to bed.

JACQUES. I am just going, Romée. Good night.

ROMÉE [*curtly*]. Good night.

[She goes off to bedroom. The dusk is now down.]

JACQUES stands still for a moment or two in a troubled attitude. Then he goes slowly to the font on the wall and prays silently. The only word that escapes his lips is "Jeanne." He ends his prayer, crosses himself, then walks slowly to the dark corner L.B. of room, and sits dreaming—or dreading.

[There is a pause, then JEANNE enters cautiously. She wears PIERRE's shoes, and carries his clothes under her arm. She does not see JACQUES in the corner, but he sees her. He sits up straight, yet seems unable to move.]

JEANNE. Good-bye, dear home! [*In tears*] Good-bye, and God bless you! God bless you! [*For a moment she stands, then she goes to outside door and opens it. JACQUES rises slowly, yet seemingly powerless. The bells begin to ring in the distance, and a ray of light shines on JEANNE.*] For France! For France!

[*JACQUES is moving slowly to the door. JEANNE takes in a deep breath, then goes out. JACQUES is now at the door and holding out his arms. The bells are gaining strength.*

JACQUES [*huskily*]. Jeanne!

JEANNE [*in the distance*]. For France!

[*The bells peal gloriously. JACQUES stands at door with powerless, outstretched arms, the ray of light shining on him, while the curtain falls.*

CURTAIN .

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A PUPPET KING

By STEPHEN WRIGHT

CHARACTERS

THE NARRATOR

LAMBERT SIMNEL

FIRST SCHOLAR

SECOND SCHOLAR

WILLIAM SYMONDS, *a priest*

SIMNEL, *a baker*

A PAGE TO THE EARL OF LINCOLN

JOHN DE LA POLE, EARL OF LINCOLN { *nephews of*
EDWARD OF WARWICK { *Edward IV*

LORD LOVELL

MARTIN SCHWARTZ, *a German captain*

THE EARL OF KILDARE

SIR THOMAS FITZGERALD

THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

HENRY VII

A CHAMBERLAIN

A CAPTAIN OF THE HORSE

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A PUPPET KING¹

NARRATOR. Cast back your minds to fourteen eighty-six.

Since that dread night when Edward the boy King
And his young brother York were foully slain,
Three years have passed. Gloucester, the ruthless
Duke,

Who caused the unholy deed, has reigned his reign
As Richard third; for soon on Bosworth field
He fell before the new-uprisen might
Of Henry Tudor, now the lawful King.

Plantagenet resentment thrives apace,
And Yorkist minds nurse hopes of power regained
By stratagem or force; and through the land
By their persistent effort rumour grows
That Edward and his brother did not die,
But from the Tower all unharmed escaped,
And yet await their time to take the throne.

So pretty plots are hatched. Of these the chief—
Such are the unexpected turns of Fate—
Was born within an Oxford baker's shop.

Hear now the story: strange it is, but true.
First, see the bakery where Master Simnel
Sells his good wares to Town and Gown alike
In strict impartiality—unless

The College bursars, having purses stuffed
With rents and tithes, beyond the modest scope

¹ Requests for permission to perform this play should be sent to Messrs George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 182 High Holborn, London, W.C.1.

Of poor but honest citizens, are charged
A trifle more—for thus they grow in grace.

[*The scene opens, showing SIMNEL's shop. LAMBERT enters, carrying a tray of pasties.*

Simnel has a son, a clever lad,
And not ill-favoured, Lambert: see him now,
And watch how Fortune plays her reckless game.

[*Two SCHOLARS, in cap and gown, enter the shop.*

1ST SCHOLAR. Good day, sir baker's boy. A couple of
your apple pasties—and see they are well-stuffed ones.

LAMBERT. Yes, sir scholar. A groat, if you please.

1ST SCHOLAR. Oh, chalk it up on the slate. We'll pay
some time or other.

LAMBERT. My father gives no credit to scholars, sir.

1ST SCHOLAR. No credit to scholars, sirrah?

LAMBERT. Scholars have such short purses—and such
short memories, sir.

1ST SCHOLAR. Listen to that, Tom. The boy is a
philosopher.

2ND SCHOLAR. A wise child, Humphrey. *Ex ore
infantium.* . . .

LAMBERT. I'm not a babe.

1ST SCHOLAR. And understands Latin, too!

LAMBERT. *Et cognosco et loquor.*

2ND SCHOLAR. Understands and speaks it, too!

1ST SCHOLAR. The Town as learned as the Gown. *O
tempora, O mores!*

2ND SCHOLAR. You shall have your groat, brother
scholar. You win. *Vicisti, ingenue puer.*

LAMBERT. *Gratias ago.*

1ST SCHOLAR. And here, a penny for yourself. When
Town and Gown next come to blows, you shall be the
Town's ambassador, and reason with the proctors in their
own tongue. Farewell, O philosopher.

2ND SCHOLAR. You will go far, my son. Farewell.

LAMBERT. *Valete!*

[*As the SCHOLARS go out, a priest, WILLIAM SYMONDS, enters.*]

SYMONDS. Well, Lambert, is business brisk to-day?

LAMBERT. Business is brisk enough, Master Symonds, but my studies aren't. I have not done my Latin exercise yet—Father keeps me here in the shop such a lot.

SYMONDS. He thinks you waste your time in learning, I know. He counts the groats you take in selling bread, and does not heed the treasures of the mind. But I have some news for him that may make him alter his sense of values.

LAMBERT. What do you mean, Master Symonds?

SYMONDS. Where is your father? I would like to talk to him.

LAMBERT. He is within: I'll fetch him. [*He calls*] Father! Master Symonds would speak with you.

SIMNEL [*from within*]. With me? [*He enters.*] I speak no Latin, Master Symonds.

SYMONDS. What I have to say is plain English, Master Simnel.

SIMNEL. Why, that sounds uncommonly straightforward for a scholar.

SYMONDS. May we go within?

SIMNEL. Why, yes. Mind the shop, Lambert. [*They go apart; LAMBERT sits reading.*] Now, reverend father, I am at your service.

SYMONDS. Your son makes great progress with his studies.

SIMNEL. I am sorry to hear it, I confess. I am a baker, sir, and so was my father before me. I would have my son a baker, too. 'Tis a good, honest trade; it brings profit and a good name. As for scholarship—why, you may get the good name, but profit. . . .

[*He shakes his head.*]

SYMONDS. Yes, we scholars are often poor, I grant you.

Yet there *are* worldly goods which none but a scholar may gain. A bishop is not poor, Master Simnel, nor a judge. . . .

SIMNEL. Lambert a bishop or a judge!

SYMONDS. Or—a king.

SIMNEL. Come, Master Symonds, you promised me plain English, not fairy stories.

SYMONDS. Are you a loyal subject of Henry Tudor, Master Simnel?

SIMNEL. Now, what is this? What are we talking of, sir?

SYMONDS. You will see. Tell me, is your sympathy with Tudor—or Plantagenet?

SIMNEL. Why, I take little account of politics. Subjects of one king or another—they all want bread. Still, if there had been some one other than the Tudor, I should have been easier in my mind.

SYMONDS. There is some one.

SIMNEL. There is? Who?

SYMONDS. Rumour has it that the late King Edward and his brother Richard were not put to death in the Tower, but escaped.

SIMNEL. God grant it. It was a cruel deed if it were done.

SYMONDS. Whether it be true or not, we must keep their cause alive. For that we must have a king to show—a real king, if we can find him: otherwise—a substitute, one who will act the part of one of those young princes.

SIMNEL. This is mighty interesting, to be sure, Master Symonds. But why should a priest be talking to a baker about plots of that kind? Have you got an imitation king up your sleeve?

SYMONDS. Up yours, Master Simnel.

SIMNEL. Up mine? You mean—Lambert?

SYMONDS. A well-spoken lad, a clever lad; a likable lad.

SIMNEL. But . . .

SYMONDS. Baking certainly has its profit, Master Simnel. But kingship has a little more, I think.

SIMNEL. But who will make Lambert king?

SYMONDS. The Earl of Lincoln will gladly act as regent for his cousin—real or substitute. He is looking for such a one.

SIMNEL. Why does not Lincoln claim the throne himself? It is said that King Richard named him his heir.

SYMONDS. My lord of Lincoln is known but little to the people. If we have a boy, a son of Edward the Fourth himself, there are many who will rally to the Plantagenet standard—in England, in Ireland, in Flanders. As for the crowning, I will do that, when I am Archbishop of Canterbury—for I deserve that reward for my coaching of his future majesty.

SIMNEL. It is fantastic, a dream. . . .

SYMONDS. It is a bold plan, perhaps. But I know the common people well. They will flock to uphold a boy king of the old Plantagenet stock against this wooden Henry Tudor.

SIMNEL. Possibly . . . possibly.

SYMONDS. No doubt of it. Now listen. My lord of Lincoln is in Oxford. Let me take Lambert to him. It may be he will think him unsuited to the part. If so, there is an end of it. If not, you still have time to choose whether or not to let the plan go forward.

SIMNEL. True. [*He calls*] Lambert! Here a moment.

[LAMBERT comes.]

LAMBERT. Yes, Father?

SIMNEL. Would you rather be a baker or . . . or a scholar, Lambert?

LAMBERT. Oh, a scholar, if you would only let me, Father. And I'm sure there is money to be made by it. Only just now I got a penny just by saying two words of Latin!

SYMONDS. How was that, Lambert?

LAMBERT. Two gentlemen from College found that I knew Latin, and called me a philosopher. One of them said I should go far.

SYMONDS. So you shall. A good omen, Master Simnel.

SIMNEL. Maybe. Lambert, Master Symonds is going to take you to pay your respects to a great man, an earl. [To SYMONDS] When, sir?

SYMONDS. To-night. I will come at seven o'clock.

LAMBERT. An earl! Do I talk to him in Latin?

SYMONDS. I will tell you what to say. Don't worry. Till to-night, Master Simnel.

SIMNEL. Good day, sir.

SYMONDS. Good-bye, Lambert.

LAMBERT. Good-bye, Master Symonds. [SYMONDS goes.] What was Master Symonds talking to you about for so long, Father? About me? Am I to be a scholar, after all?

SIMNEL. A scholar? Maybe. . . . I think I am dreaming, Lambert. Let us take the new baking from the oven. The sight of good round loaves will bring me back to earth again. Though kings may come and kings may go, bread must we always have. Loaves are more real than crowns these days.

[The scene closes, and opens again on a room in the apartments of the EARL OF LINCOLN. SYMONDS and LAMBERT SIMNEL are shown into the room by a PAGE.

PAGE. My lord of Lincoln will be with you presently.

[He goes; SYMONDS and LAMBERT sit.

SYMONDS. Remember, stand up directly the earl comes in.

LAMBERT. Hadn't we better stand up now, so as to be ready?

SYMONDS. No, no. That would look as though we were impatient.

[A pause; LAMBERT fidgets.

LAMBERT. I wish he would hurry up.

SYMONDS. It is the privilege of the great to keep people waiting. He won't be long now.

[*The PAGE enters and ushers in the EARL OF LINCOLN.*]

LINCOLN. Good evening, reverend sir. So this is the boy.

SYMONDS. This is Lambert Simnel, my lord.

LINCOLN. My cousin-to-be, eh? He looks likely enough.

SYMONDS. Stand forward, Lambert.

LAMBERT. My service to your lordship.

LINCOLN. A baker's son, are you, boy?

LAMBERT. Yes, my lord.

LINCOLN. But you aim at something higher than your father's station, I hear. You prefer books to baking, learning to loaves, eh?

LAMBERT. I am fond of study, my lord.

LINCOLN. Unnatural, but convenient. You know Latin?

LAMBERT. And a little logic, my lord. Master Symonds taught me.

LINCOLN. A most precocious and promising child. A discovery, in fact, Master Symonds. I congratulate you.

SYMONDS. Though he is not of gentle birth, his manners are gentle.

LINCOLN. But he's very young. If King Edward is still alive, he must be turned sixteen.

SYMONDS. But his brother, Prince Richard?

LINCOLN. If one is dead, both are; if one lives, both live—or so the people will have it. But my other cousin, Clarence's son, Edward of Warwick, who is in the Tower, and likely to be so long as Henry Tudor reigns—he is just about this boy's age. We can turn the rumour round to say it is *he* who has escaped.

SYMONDS. Yes, my lord. And when our cause is won?

LINCOLN. Why, then Lambert shall go to college at the royal expense, while the real Edward Warwick takes his rightful place.

SYMONDS. Do you understand this, Lambert?

LAMBERT. I am not sure. . . .

LINCOLN. You are my cousin, Edward of Warwick, rightfully Edward the Sixth, King of England. Forget everything else. You understand that?

LAMBERT. Yes, my lord.

LINCOLN. Perhaps you will have to be king all your life. Would you like that?

LAMBERT. Yes, my lord.

LINCOLN. If not, you shall go to college and study Latin and logic to your heart's content. You would like that, too?

LAMBERT. Even better, my lord, I think.

LINCOLN. Good. Now, Master Symonds, I leave the boy to you to coach in yet another subject—royalty. When the time comes, we will raise our standard in the name of King Edward the Sixth. Meanwhile, rumour shall prepare the ground.

SYMONDS. What of the boy's father, my lord?

LINCOLN. A purse of gold will shut his mouth, I expect?

SYMONDS. No doubt.

LINCOLN. Shut it fast with this. [*Gives him a purse.*] And hint at more to come, if all goes well and secretly.

SYMONDS. I will, my lord.

LINCOLN. And now, your Majesty, good night.

LAMBERT. Good night, my lor—

LINCOLN. No, no. Cousin. Noble cousin, if you like.

LAMBERT. Good night, my noble cousin.

SYMONDS. Good night to your lordship. Your Majesty will come with me?

LAMBERT. We will, Master Symonds.

[*He draws himself up and walks out majestically.*]

LINCOLN. Very good! A king to the life. Fare you well.

[*The scene closes.*]

NARRATOR. So the plot is hatched, and, as they planned,
The rumour grows that Edward Warwick lives;
At length they raise his standard openly,
Though cautious Lincoln still feigns innocence.
Those wavering hearts, that still feel loyalty
Towards the young Plantagenets, are moved
To insurrection 'gainst the Tudor King.
They think, or fain would think, the handsome boy
Who claims the crown of England is in truth
Their rightful sovran King. So day by day
The rebels prosper. Henry, in alarm,
Summons a council of nobility
At Sheen, and there decides what moves be made
To check the danger. Unsuspected yet,
Lincoln is at this council; he begs leave
To visit his real cousin in the Tower.
Henry consents. Behold the interview.

*[The scene opens upon the room in the Tower occupied
by EDWARD OF WARWICK; EDWARD sits reading,
when the EARL OF LINCOLN enters.]*

LINCOLN. Well met, cousin Edward!

EDWARD. Cousin? . . . I know you not.

LINCOLN. Your cousin John, Earl of Lincoln. It is
many years since we met at our uncle Edward's court.

EDWARD. Why, yes, I think I remember you. It is so
long since I saw anyone I know. So very long.

LINCOLN. Our other cousins, Edward and Richard—
they were here in the Tower?

EDWARD. A long time ago. I used to watch them play-
ing tennis, from my window here; but I was never
allowed to play with them, or even speak to them. Where
are they now?

LINCOLN. Nobody knows. They may be here still, for
all you or I can tell. Or . . . may their souls rest in peace.
[He crosses himself.]

EDWARD. Dead. . . .

LINCOLN. Now listen, Edward; I have much to tell you in few minutes. Great things are afoot.

EDWARD. Great things? Shall I be set free?

LINCOLN. Yes, all in good time. But first we must chase Henry Tudor from his throne. There are many who will help, but they need encouragement, and the promise of success. To give direction to their hopes, we have dressed up a boy to look like you, and told people that he is the king—you.

EDWARD. Am I really king, then?

LINCOLN. If Edward and Richard are dead, as is most likely, then either you or I must be the rightful king.

EDWARD. I'm not old enough.

LINCOLN. You shall be king, and I will be regent until you are of age.

EDWARD. But who is this other boy who is pretending to be me?

LINCOLN. He is nobody—the son of a baker, from Oxford. He plays the part well enough. And when we have got the country on our side, and driven out Henry Tudor, we can easily dispose of Master Lambert.

EDWARD. Does Henry know of your rebellion yet?

LINCOLN. Yes. I have come straight from a council at Sheen, where plans for crushing the revolt were made. My part in it he does not suspect so far; but at any moment he may discover it. So I have a ship ready to take me to Flanders. We sail by this evening's tide, in less than an hour.

EDWARD. But who will fight Henry if you go away?

LINCOLN. In Flanders I shall meet Lord Lovell, and we shall collect a thousand or two of German soldiers. Thence we go to Ireland, where we meet Lambert Simnel, the pretended King, and the rest of our party. We shall raise the Irish in our cause, and then we cross to England again, and, by God's grace, win the day.

EDWARD. And what did Henry decide at this council you have come from?

LINCOLN. He is going to show you to the people, to prove that our boy is not the real Edward Warwick.

EDWARD. Then your plan is ruined!

LINCOLN. By no means. News travels slowly. Besides, how are people to know that you are Edward more than Lambert Simnel is?

EDWARD. That's true. Anyway, I shall be let out of the Tower for once: that will be exciting. I don't care who people think I am.

LINCOLN. They will know well enough when they see you crowned, Edward.

EDWARD. Yes. How wonderful it will be! Hurry up and beat Henry, cousin John. I shall die if I don't get out of here soon.

LINCOLN. How do they treat you here?

EDWARD. Well enough, I suppose. I can do what I like—but there's nothing to do. It's so lonely. Besides the chaplain and the servants, there isn't a soul to talk to. You *must* hurry up, cousin John.

LINCOLN. We shan't be long, I promise you—a month or two.

EDWARD. I can scarcely believe it—it seems too good to be true. But—if you fail? If Henry beats you instead of your beating Henry?

LINCOLN. Never fear. The right always wins in the end. Now, good-bye, Edward. If anyone asks you what we have talked of, say of old times, of our uncle Edward.

EDWARD. Nothing I say shall betray you. Good-bye, cousin John. Good luck.

LINCOLN. God bless you. [*He goes. The scene closes.*]

NARRATOR. To Flanders then goes Lincoln; there he finds

Lord Lovell well disposed to join the cause.

Two thousand Germans under Martin Schwartz,

Their bold commander, with them cross the seas
To Ireland. Thither now we follow them.

It is young Lambert's day of days: the crown,
The royal crown of England, has been set
Upon his boyish brow in Dublin city.
In the Cathedral the admiring folk
Hear the Archbishop joyously proclaim
Edward the Sixth, in due and proper form,
Crowned and anointed King.

The solemn rites

Are over now; the anthems and the bells
Ring out their last glad tidings, and are still.
After the pomp and pageantry there comes
The time for martial plans and politics.
The leaders of revolt take counsel. See
Lincoln and Lovell, and the German Schwartz,
Fitzgerald, and the other Irish lords
Debating how to use their puppet king
To best advantage.

*[The scene opens on a chapel in the Cathedral at
Dublin, on 24th May, 1487. There enter the
EARL OF LINCOLN, LORD LOVELL, MARTIN
SCHWARTZ, the EARL OF KILDARE, SIR THOMAS
FITZGERALD, and other PEERS.]*

LINCOLN. We are all agreed on one point at least, I think. We must make a quick move at once, while popular feeling is excited.

KILDARE. I would not be too sure. A move that failed now would wreck our cause completely. We should do nothing too hastily.

LINCOLN. What would you have us do, then, noble Kildare?

KILDARE. In Ireland we are safe: the King is safe too. Let us stay here awhile and strengthen our forces, and when we strike, strike without doubt of success.

LINCOLN. While we strengthen ourselves in Ireland, Henry Tudor is strengthening himself in England, remember. What do you say, Lovell?

LOVELL. I suggest a compromise. We should not stake everything in one rash attempt—in that I am with Kildare. But why not send an advance-guard to England to prepare the ground? If they are not strong enough to fight with Henry, they can easily keep out of his way without loss of prestige. When interest in our cause has been properly aroused—in short, when we have shown that we mean business, then we produce our trump card—the king.

LINCOLN. Without showing the King in person I see little hope of rousing interest—we merely waste our time.

KILDARE. What do the military men say? Fitzgerald, could you not raise twice as many levies as you have already, given a few weeks more?

FITZGERALD. Shure there's many lads in Ireland would be joining us. But will we be sitting here, waiting till they travel from the ends of the four provinces? I have a brave lot already, spoiling for a fight. Let us get to England, and set upon this Henry Tudor while our blood is up. It's not for sitting still God made us Irishmen—saving your Grace's pardon, Kildare. My lads must be up and doing, or it's fighting one another they will be ere long, and no mistaking.

LOVELL. And, Schwartz, what think you?

SCHWARTZ. We Shermans will do what iss commanded. If we must wait in Ireland, we will wait—though it iss a barbarous lant, and in culture very lacking. If we to go to England are commanded, we go, and we fight when we ordered are.

FITZGERALD. A barbarous land, is it? I would have ye to know, me fine German captain, that the kings of Ireland were holding their courts in palaces of marble

and of silver, here on the green hills of Tara, while it's roving the wild forests like savage beasts were your Teuton tribes.

SCHWARTZ. Excuse me. Off the present have I spoken. At the time whereoff you so eloquently speak was I yet not born.

FITZGERALD. It's begging the question ye are, and on that score I have ye beat. As for the present, we Irishmen dream of the future when the past will come true again. What is culture but the feeling of the past to be builded in the future?

SCHWARTZ. That is not practical. For the Sherman are important the things that to-day are done. He will not for the future wait, he will himself make the future, yes. Dreams—ach!—that is for the women and the little boys.

FITZGERALD. Women and little boys! And where, if ye please, will ye find a better fighter than the Irishman?

[*The ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN enters.*]

KILDARE. Hold hard, Fitzgerald. Here's the Archbishop to make peace between you.

FITZGERALD [*to the ARCHBISHOP*]. Your Grace will back me up when it's bragging foreigners do slander the fair name of Ireland.

ARCHBISHOP. You slander her fair name yourself, good Fitzgerald, when you brawl in the Cathedral.

LOVELL. Where's the King, archbishop?

ARCHBISHOP. His Majesty is disrobing.

KILDARE. The poor child must have been uncomfortable enough in all that finery.

FITZGERALD. Begorrah, I thought that great crown would be breaking the neck of him. Though he surely was a pretty sight, with his gentle voice, and his wide round eyes shining like the stars do be gleaming over Sheelin Water.

LOVELL. You Irish think in poetry, Sir Thomas. But

as a practical man, like our good friend Schwartz, I fear I saw the King only as a political factor—a pawn in the game. And the question now is, how to make best use of him.

LINCOLN. You bring us back to the point, Lovell. Everything seems to go to prove that we should make a military demonstration in England without delay. But—shall we take the King or not?

KILDARE. Keep him here awhile.

LOVELL. I agree, Kildare. It's safer so.

LINCOLN. I am for taking him. Without him we can claim no authority.

FITZGERALD. Faith, let's take the child. He'll win the English hearts, and keep ours hopeful.

LINCOLN. Archbishop, you had better give a casting vote.

[LAMBERT enters with SYMONDS.

ARCHBISHOP. Here is his Majesty. Is it not for him to decide?

LINCOLN. Cousin, you come in good time. Your Council of State disagrees as to what should be done.

LAMBERT. Does it always disagree?

LOVELL. Not uncommonly, your Majesty.

KILDARE. And then your Majesty must call us to order, and make up our minds for us.

LAMBERT. What have I got to make up your minds about now?

LINCOLN. Subject to your Majesty's approval, we are sending an army to England at once. Does your Majesty prefer to go with it, or to stay here awhile in Ireland?

LAMBERT. I will go with it, of course! What's the good of being crowned King of England, if I'm not there to rule it?

LOVELL. I give you best, Lincoln. So be it.

FITZGERALD. To England, and a good fight!

SCHWARTZ. In that sentiment will I most heartily join,

Sir Thomas. To leave Ireland will to me much pleasure bring.

KILDARE. No more squabbles. Archbishop, keep between them, or they will be at it again.

ARCHBISHOP. A most dangerous position. Come, gentlemen.

LINCOLN. My royal cousin, I congratulate you upon a most statesmanlike decision. An excellent start to your reign. Keep it up. *[The PEERS draw apart.]*

SYMONDS. Well, your Majesty, and how does it feel to be crowned King?

LAMBERT. It was thrilling. But I thought I should never be able to stand up with that huge crown on my head. It nearly fell off once. And it's given me a headache.

SYMONDS. You won't have to wear it much. You'll have another coronation in London, all being well. But I shall crown you—for I shall be Archbishop of Canterbury by then—and we'll have a special crown made for you.

LAMBERT. I'm glad we're going back to England. I hope the sea isn't so rough this time. I was so ill.

SYMONDS. The strength of your kingdom, your Majesty, lies in this fact: nobody can conquer England, because they get so seasick on the way that they haven't the strength to fight. If Henry knew where we were landing, it would be all up with us, too: but he's miles away in the Midlands, and we shall have plenty of time to recover.

LAMBERT. Supposing there were ships that could fly through the air. That would make a lot of difference.

SYMONDS. But there aren't. And if there were, the English climate is so fickle that like as not they'd find themselves blown away to the moon. Come along, your Majesty; they're waiting for you.

[LAMBERT goes out, followed by the PEERS and SYMONDS. The scene closes.]

NARRATOR. And so they stake their all on one bold throw :
They cross the sea, and land in Lancashire
Ere Henry knows their purpose: Martin Schwartz
And his two thousand Germans form their strength ;
Fitzgerald and his Irish, keen but fickle,
Lend their uncertain aid. The spurious King,
Upon whose presence Lincoln built high hopes,
Has proved but little value, for the folk
Already acquiesce in Tudor rule,
And shy at fresh disturbance, be the cause
Never so just. And thus they come to Stoke,
Where Henry and his army lie encamped.
It is the eve of battle. Lambert's tent
Stands once more ready to receive a boy
Weary of marching through a listless land,
Weary of kingship that is but a name,
Weary for home. Weary, oh, so weary.

[*The scene opens on LAMBERT's tent. LAMBERT and SYMONDS enter.*]

LAMBERT. Where are we now, Master Symonds? How tired I am! Shall we be at Oxford soon?

SYMONDS. Your Majesty. . . .

LAMBERT. Oh, please don't call me that to-night. Call me Lambert, as you used to in Oxford.

SYMONDS. Why . . . Lambert. You are not downhearted to be so near home?

LAMBERT. Are we really near home? Near Oxford?

SYMONDS. Not so *very* far, Lambert. Yonder lies the River Trent, and Stoke is but a mile or two away.

LAMBERT. Stoke? I hoped you would say Woodstock.

SYMONDS. Here come your cousin Lincoln and the officers. Remember now, your Majesty again.

LAMBERT. Cousin! Majesty! Where is the *real* King Edward. He can have his "cousin" and his "Majesty," if only I could be back in the bake-house again.

SYMONDS. Hush! [LINCOLN *enters*.

LINCOLN. Well, how fares my royal cousin? Great things are happening soon.

LAMBERT. What things—cousin?

LINCOLN. Why, Henry Tudor, the usurping Henry Seventh, and his traitorous army lie encamped beyond Stoke-on-Trent. We shall fight them to-morrow.

LAMBERT. Shall you win?

LINCOLN. Your Majesty, the right always wins.

LAMBERT. Then you will lose. I'm not the King. Not so much as Henry Tudor is—any more than I'm your cousin.

LINCOLN. Be silent, boy!

SYMONDS. The boy is tired, noble Lincoln. Let him sleep. When he wakes up to-morrow he will be as royal as the best.

LINCOLN. He had better be. Quiet, now—I hear Fitzgerald and Schwartz. They must not know the truth. [FITZGERALD and SCHWARTZ *enter*.

SCHWARTZ. I haf you hundret times told, Sir Thomas, that two tousant Shermans will all the English army beat, and if you Irish will not fight, that makes nothings, no difference, no!

FITZGERALD. Irish not fight, is it! Now listen: I was after telling ye that no man can fight his best when it's twenty miles he has marched over hill and dale under the hell-fire sun of this June weather.

SCHWARTZ. The Sherman iss not with the weather concerned, nor with the miles that he marches. He will march or he will fight exactly as he iss told.

FITZGERALD. The poor divil! Ye're a hard man, Schwartz, and it's not by hardness ye'll get the best out of a soldier, Irish or German.

SCHWARTZ. You presume to teach me my duty ass commander, iss it not?

FITZGERALD. Och, the divil take your duty, and. . . .

LINCOLN. Gentlemen—his Majesty.

FITZGERALD. Shure, if the bold German has not made me forget me court manners. [*He kneels.*] Your Majesty, it's a soldier I am, and apt to forget meself when there's talk of fighting. Kneel, Schwartz, ye great spalpeen, and kiss the royal hand before the battle ye're so keen to be fighting.

SCHWARTZ [*kneeling*]. My service to your Mashesty.

FITZGERALD. We quarrel like cats and dogs, your Majesty, but it's your Majesty we will both be serving, and dying for, maybe.

LAMBERT. Thank you, Sir Thomas. Thank you, Captain Schwartz.

FITZGERALD. Now to business. Lincoln, Schwartz is for fighting straight away. My Irish boys are eager enough, but they're dog-tired after this day's march. And the country folks hereabouts—it's wiser it would be to get them on our side first, I'm thinking.

LINCOLN. There's little hope of that until we've won the battle, Sir Thomas. But I think we should fight soon. Not to-night, though—to-morrow morning. You will both be satisfied then?

SCHWARTZ. Goot.

FITZGERALD. A night's rest, and, begorrah, we will have Harry Tudor on the hop.

LINCOLN. Does your Majesty approve?

LAMBERT. Me? Oh, yes; don't have any fighting to-night, please. Master Symonds, let's have prayers now, and I'll go to bed.

SYMONDS. Very good, your Majesty.

LINCOLN. Come to my tent, Fitzgerald, and you, Schwartz. We must make to-morrow's dispositions. Good night, noble cousin.

FITZGERALD }
SCHWARTZ } Good night, your Majesty.

[*They go.*]

LAMBERT. Good night. Will they let *me* fight to-morrow, Master Symonds? I'd like that, I think. I'm sick of having my hands kissed, and your Majesty this, and your Majesty that. It was fun at first, but now I want to *do* something.

SYMONDS. You shall ride before the troops, and they will cheer you as they march off to fight. But you mustn't get into danger.

LAMBERT. What's the fun, then? And if I'm supposed to be King, why can't I do as I like?

SYMONDS. You will find to-morrow exciting enough, I dare say. Shall we have prayers?

LAMBERT. Yes. Not too long ones. . . .

[The scene closes.]

NARRATOR. Then sleep, young King and not a king,
for dawn

Will bring a stranger day than even that

Which raised a baker's son to royal state.

To-morrow shall thy reign have sudden end.

To-morrow morn thou ridest as a King:

To-morrow eve, what humble lot is thine!

The battle rages. All throughout the day

Brave Schwartz leads on his Germans to the fray.

Time after time they charge the Tudor ranks

And press them hard, and drive them to the banks

Of Trent's broad stream; while ceaseless on their flanks

Fitzgerald and his Irish charge, and charge

Again, and yet again. But on the marge

The Tudor army rallies, for at length

The attackers tire: exhausted now their strength,

And now attacked in turn, their thinning line

Wavers and breaks. The Tudor standards shine

Over the field. Poor Lambert's cause is lost.

The German hirelings well have earned their cost,

But Schwartz is dead, and his two thousand men

Are scarce as many hundred. Chances then,

Crying aloud "To Tudor dogs bad cess!"
Fitzgerald falls: his levies, leaderless,
Scatter and flee, while only Lincoln stands
Between his puppet King and Henry's bands.
Lincoln dies, too. And trembling in his tent,
Weak Symonds undergoes rough punishment
For his presumptuous part. They spare his life,
And Lambert Simnel's, too; and when the strife
Is over, drag them where proud Henry sits,
The conqueror, to judge them as befits
His mercy and their crime; while all around
Triumphant songs of victory resound.

[The scene opens. HENRY VII enters, followed by OFFICERS, NOBLES, and SOLDIERS. The SOLDIERS are heard singing.]

CHORUS. Beneath the flag of liberty,
We fight to keep our country free.
To Henry Tudor hail!
His cause shall never fail.
England, thou art free,
Thine is the victory!
England, over thee
Shall never foe prevail.

The Tudor rose for us shall be
An everlasting memory
Of honour, truth, and right:
Of God who gave us might.
England, thou art free,
Thine is the victory!
England, over thee
Our faith shines ever bright.

[A CHAMBERLAIN approaches KING HENRY.]

CHAMBERLAIN. Your Majesty, the Captain of the Horse, to present his report.

HENRY. Very good. We will hear it.

[*The CAPTAIN enters and salutes.*]

CAPTAIN. Your Majesty: you saw how the Irish broke and fled when their leader, Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, fell. I gave orders that they should all be rounded up and taken prisoner; or, if they resisted, should be slain outright. Not many of them made any show of resistance, your Majesty, for they were utterly dispirited at their defeat, and had no hope of saving themselves or those they served.

HENRY. Poor fellows; they were fighting another's battle. But had it been their own cause that was lost, they would have fought to the death. I know the Irish.

CAPTAIN. With a few picked men I pressed onward to the enemy's headquarters. On a little hill was a tent over which the royal ensign waved. Before it stood my lord of Lincoln with a handful of his soldiers. They fought valiantly, and we were forced to slay them to a man.

HENRY. Lincoln, too. The last Plantagenet. . . . And in the tent—what found you there?

CAPTAIN. First we saw a skulking priest, your Majesty. At sight of us he screamed and raved and sobbed like a woman. My men were not gentle with him, but he made no real defence. So I ordered him to be bound, and brought to your Majesty.

HENRY. And the boy—did you find him?

CAPTAIN. We did, your Majesty. A plucky little devil—I beg your Majesty's pardon. He made for me with a drawn sword, but it was easy to knock it from his little hand. We have him here with the priest.

HENRY. Our thanks to you, sir. You have performed your duty perfectly. [*The CAPTAIN salutes and retires.*] Now let the priest and the boy be brought. [*SYMONDS and LAMBERT are brought in.*] So. First, let the priest come forward. What is your name, sir?

SYMONDS. William Symonds, your Majesty, clerk in Holy orders in the city of Oxford.

HENRY. What was your part in this rebellion?

SYMONDS. I knew that my lord of Lincoln wished to find some boy who could be set up as Pretender to your throne, your Majesty, in the name of the Plantagenets. This boy was my pupil, and I thought him a likely candidate.

HENRY. And the Earl of Lincoln liked him, too? I see. And what was your reward?

SYMONDS. None, your Majesty, until the plot had proved successful. Then I was to be Archbishop of Canterbury.

HENRY. Archbishop, eh? You aim high, reverend sir: your pupil a King and yourself Archbishop. A delightful prospect. Now listen, sir. By rights your presumption should be punished with death; but already too much blood has been shed in this unhappy business. You shall live, sir priest of Oxford.

SYMONDS. I thank your Majesty.

HENRY. But that you may learn that virtue of humility, wherein you seem to have had too little practice, you shall be confined for the rest of your earthly days within a dungeon, there to meditate upon the vanity of pride and upon the blessings of a meek and contrite heart. [SYMONDS *makes as if to speak.*] No words. Take him away. [SYMONDS *is led out.*] Now come here, boy. Your name is Lambert Simnel.

LAMBERT. Yes, your Majesty.

HENRY. A baker's son from Oxford, I am told.

LAMBERT. Yes, your Majesty. But I know Latin, so. . . .

HENRY. So on the strength of that you dared to usurp the name and crown of Edward Plantagenet.

LAMBERT. They called me that, your Majesty.

HENRY. Do not shirk your own guilt, boy. If others led you into this fearful crime, you had the wit to know its meaning, and, young as you are, you could have put an end to the deceit.

LAMBERT. I suppose I could. But I was told that you were a usurper, and had no more right to the crown than I.

HENRY. And you still believe that?

LAMBERT. No, your Majesty. You beat us; and as the Earl of Lincoln said, the right always wins.

HENRY. Not always, I'm afraid. But God be thanked it has proved true this time. Now what punishment do you think you deserve?

LAMBERT. I suppose I shall be beheaded.

HENRY. You heard me say to your poor wretch of a tutor that too much blood has been shed to-day?

LAMBERT. But I was the King, and if anybody's blood should be shed it ought to be mine, oughtn't it? And I'm only small—it won't mean very much more.

HENRY. Do you want to die?

LAMBERT. Of course not, your Majesty.

HENRY. You are a lad of spirit, Lambert Simnel, and too sturdy and well-looking a specimen of English boyhood to be cut off so young. But you have played with treason: for that you shall hold an office not quite so high as kingship. A bake-house was your home, eh?

LAMBERT. Yes, your Majesty.

HENRY. Chamberlain!

CHAMBERLAIN. Your Majesty?

HENRY. Take this boy in your charge. When we are back in London, find him some humble post in the royal kitchen. See he is spared no indignities—he has much to unlearn. And report on him from time to time.

CHAMBERLAIN. It shall be done, your Majesty.

HENRY. The other prisoners we will consider to-morrow. To-night let the ghastly aftermath of battle be looked to, and all done for the sufferers that can be done. And now let us thank God for granting us the victory, and for preserving our realm from worse disorder.

[All say "Amen." HENRY goes out, followed by the rest. The scene closes.]

NARRATOR. So ended Lambert's kingship; luckless child—

No more did Oxford's citizens and wives,
Coming to buy their cakes at Simnel's shop,
Give greeting to the pretty baker's boy,
Who, clever past his years and well behaved
Beyond his station, might have come to be
A pillar of the Church, or of the Law,
Had not his fortune drawn too far her bow
And aimed at Majesty, a perilous peak
From whence poor Lambert came a-tumbling down
And fell untimely into menial tasks,
Scouring the pans that held the royal cakes
And drawing from the oven royal loaves
With hands that once had held the royal orb
And sceptre. No, poor Lambert, not for thee
The pride and pomp and circumstance of kings—
Only the toil and moil of common men.

CURTAIN

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THE KING DECIDES

By JOHN HAMPDEN

CHARACTERS

HERNANDO DE TALAVERA, *the Queen's Confessor*

RODRIGUEZ DE NAVA, *a Chamberlain*

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS¹

ALONSO DE QUINTANILLA, *Treasurer of Castile*

FERDINAND, *King of Castile, Aragon, etc.*

ISABELLA, *Queen of Castile*

COURTIERS, MEN-AT-ARMS, ETC., *as desired*

SCENE. In the Spanish camp, 1492. The setting may be simple or elaborate, or the play may be given in the open air.

The R. and L. of the stage-directions are those of the audience.

¹ Cristóval Colon, the Spanish form of Columbus's name, is used by all the other characters except Nava, who keeps to the Italian form, Colombo, to emphasize the fact that Columbus is a foreigner.

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THE KING DECIDES¹

It is a bright spring day in 1492, in the camp of the Spanish army, commanded by FERDINAND and ISABELLA, which has lately brought eight centuries of warfare to an end by driving the Moors out of the Peninsula.

When the curtain rises it reveals one corner of a large marquee, the royal audience chamber. The two thrones stand upon the dais to R., and behind them hangs a curtain of black velvet, blazoned with the arms of Castile and Aragon. There is no other furniture visible except a long bench against the tent wall, down L. The tent is hung round with curtains and tapestries, and the entrance, L.C., is closed by curtains.

At the right-hand end of the bench sits FATHER HERNANDO DE TALAVERA, carefully flattening out a roll of parchment on his knee. When he has done this to his satisfaction he adjusts a pair of hinged pince-nez ('gasingis') on his nose and frowns at the script.

The curtains covering the entrance are thrust aside, and DON RODRIGUEZ DE NAVA enters abruptly, startling TALAVERA so much that his pince-nez fall to the end of their ribbon.

NAVA [*with a quick glance round*]. So the madman is not here.

TALAVERA [*rising, a little alarmed*]. The madman?

NAVA. This Genoese, Colombo. He has audience to-day?

¹Applications regarding amateur performances of this play should be addressed to Messrs Samuel French, Ltd., 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, or 25 West 45th Street, New York.

TALavera. Yes, Don Rodriguez—but brief and informal audience. You seek him?

NAVA. God forbid, unless it were with slaves and cudgels. I came seeking you, and feared he might be beforehand. What will come of this audience, Father?

TALavera [*glancing at his parchment and sitting down again*]. That, I think, is already decided.

NAVA [*sitting beside him*]. And the decision?

TALavera [*with satisfaction, putting on his pince-nez*]. The decision, Don Rodriguez, has been made with due circumspection and consideration and is here set forth, his Majesty, whom Heaven preserve, having entrusted the examination of this Cristóval Colon and his claims to a Junta of learned fathers and others who came together at San Estéban in Salamanca under my presidency, and their Majesties have asked me to deliver to-day the findings of the reverend Junta. You may remember, Don Rodriguez, that her Majesty did me the honour to make me president also of the committee which met some six years ago to consider this same matter, and as keeper of her Majesty's conscience——

NAVA [*unable to restrain his impatience any longer*]. Yes, yes, but what has the Junta decided?

TALavera [*looks at him reproachfully, adjusts his pince-nez, and returns to the parchment*]. The reverend Junta is of one mind in the matter, except that Fray Diego de Deza——

NAVA. And what is the Junta's mind?

TALavera [*now slightly annoyed*]. The reverend Junta agrees, as did my own committee of some six years ago, that this Cristóval Colon, being a man of low birth and little learning, a foreigner also——

NAVA [*shifting impatiently on the bench*]. Father, does the Junta recommend that he should have his ships or not?

TALavera [*severely*]. If you had allowed me to continue,

Don Rodriguez, you would have learned by this time that it does not.

NAVA [*exultantly*]. Ah! [*Springing to his feet*] Then we shall be rid of the impostor at last!

TALavera. The Junta does not condemn him as an impostor, but——

NAVA [*pacing across the tent*]. But he is! A mountebank! I will tell him so to his face. [*Turning sharply*] But will the King take the Junta's advice?

TALavera [*rising, astounded, his pince-nez tumbling again*]. Will the King——? Of course he will.

NAVA [*approaching him*]. I am not so sure. Most of us treat the Genoese as he deserves. But his importunity and fine words have impressed certain people, and if——

TALavera [*sitting down again*]. Fine words will not impress his Majesty.

NAVA [*unconvinced*]. No . . . but his advisers. . . .

TALavera. Moreover, this long Moorish war, though heaven has so signally crowned our arms with victory, has left the treasury empty. Even two small caravels would cost many thousand maravedis, and why should his Majesty throw money into the sea?

NAVA. And the Queen?

TALavera. Am not I the keeper of the Queen's conscience?

NAVA [*thoughtfully*]. Yes. . . . She shows due respect for your opinion, Father. . . . Yet the Marchesa de Moya favours the Genoese. And Don Luis de Santangel.

TALavera. But the King decides.

NAVA. Yes, the King decides. [*Pacing to and fro*] Yet [*vindictively*] there is something about this scoundrel——

TALavera. Remember that hatred is numbered among the seven deadly sins, my son. Surely you have no just reason to hate this Colon?

NAVA [*stopping short*]. No reason! A Genoese! A renegade! A penniless guttersnipe with the airs of a

grand duke! Why should he live idle on the Queen's bounty while so many honest soldiers cannot get their pay? For seven years now he has tagged after us from camp to city, from city to camp, for ever pestering me for audience with Cardinal this and Duke the other [TALAVERA *raises a deprecating hand in vain*] and always talking, talking, talking, about this mad notion of a new world. He hasn't another idea in his head. And the insolence of the fellow! [COLUMBUS *enters quietly, unnoticed, and remains standing at the door.*] He met me yesterday full in the East Gate, and held the centre of the road as calmly as though he were the King himself. 'Sdeath, I almost wish he were a gentleman, so that he might taste my sword.

COLUMBUS [*without moving, a hot-tempered man controlling himself well*]. If you speak of me, Señor, your wish is granted.

NAVA [*startled*]. I—— [*His hand drops to his sword-hilt; COLUMBUS's does the same.*] Pah!

[*He turns away in contempt. COLUMBUS stands for a moment grimly surveying his enemy's back. He is a man of forty-one, strongly built and of middle height, his prematurely white hair in striking contrast to his weather-tanned face. He is very plainly dressed, but carries himself with great dignity. He bows to TALAVERA and moves towards him, the PRIOR nodding in return.*

COLUMBUS. I count myself fortunate to find you here before their Majesties give me audience, Reverend Father.

TALAVERA [*blinking at him through his pince-nez, a little apprehensively*]. You are welcome, Señor.

[NAVA *half turns, in resentment of the PRIOR's courtesy, but checks himself.*

COLUMBUS. My patience can keep me here no longer, Father. If his Majesty should decide against me to-day, I set out for France to-morrow.

NAVA [*half to himself*]. The first welcome speech he has made in my hearing.

COLUMBUS [*continuing unchecked*]. Your word carries much weight in this matter.

TALavera. You know the finding of the Junta, Señor, and it is my duty to-day to deliver that finding.

COLUMBUS. I know, yet it seems to me that you did not decide without much hesitation, and that even now you might be persuaded. I beseech you to hear me yet once more.

TALavera. I have already heard you at length, Señor.

NAVA [*muttering*]. Who has not?

COLUMBUS. You have heard me always, Father, with the courtesy so singularly lacking in some who boast much of their breeding. [*Stung, NAVA moves nearer.*] But consider, for the last time. Spain's future lies in the balance. The empire which I offer——

NAVA [*outraged*]. The son of the bankrupt weaver offers an empire!

COLUMBUS [*turning on him*]. And seeks it where the son of the grandee dare not follow.

NAVA	} [<i>together</i>]	{ Dare not! 'Sdeath——
TALavera		

COLUMBUS. Dare not. I know your courage in battle, Don Rodriguez. I fought beside you in the wood at Baza. But dare you sail with me into the Sea of Darkness?

NAVA [*a little disconcerted, and blustering to cover it*]. Nor would any sane man. Go back to Genoa, and get a crew of madmen like yourself.

TALavera [*rising*]. Gentlemen, gentlemen.

COLUMBUS [*his hand on his sword-hilt*]. Take care, Don Rodriguez.

NAVA. Do you threaten a gentleman! The guard shall deal with you.

COLUMBUS [*drawing*]. I threaten a coward.

NAVA [*stepping back as though struck*]. Coward!

[*He draws his sword. The two are about to engage.*]

TALavera [*flustering between them*]. Gentlemen. Don Rodriguez—Señor Colon——

NAVA. Stand aside.

[*A trumpet sounds at a little distance. The curtain is lifted, and DON ALONSO DE QUINTANILLA enters quickly.*]

QUINTANILLA [*angry and aghast*]. Are you all mad—or drunk? [*He takes COLUMBUS by the arm.*] Señor——

[*COLUMBUS lowers his sword.*]

TALavera. Now, now, Don Rodriguez, put up your sword.

NAVA [*wavering*]. No—— This insult——

QUINTANILLA [*with authority*]. Rodriguez, do you value your head? Their Majesties will be here in a moment. And you, Señor [*to COLUMBUS*], would you have the Queen find you brawling in the audience chamber? What hope of her favour then?

TALavera. Gentlemen, put up your swords. [*He is very vexed with them both.*] Most unseemly. Disgraceful.

[*With an angry exclamation NAVA claps his sword into its sheath and turns away to L. TALavera follows and tries to pacify him.*]

COLUMBUS [*sheathing his sword*]. I ask your pardon, my lord. But the man's insults were not to be borne.

NAVA. 'Sdeath!

[*He starts forward again fiercely, TALavera dragging at his arm.*]

QUINTANILLA. Enough of this. Señor Colon [*drawing him away to L.*] if you value—— [*He speaks to him persuasively in an undertone. The trumpet sounds again, near at hand. There is the thud of pikes being grounded. Two COURTIERs enter and draw aside the curtains. Enter the KING and QUEEN, followed by a few gentlemen of the court and by two MEN-AT-ARMS carrying halberds. The entry is dignified, but not ceremonious. The four men already in the room bow very low. The two SOVEREIGNS mount the steps of the dais,*]

and the KING hands the QUEEN to her throne under the arms of Castile, all present (except the men-at-arms) bowing as the two take their seats. The first two courtiers close the curtains and join the others, who group themselves to R., well down stage. The men-at-arms stand on guard, one at each side of the entrance. COLUMBUS moves to C. of the stage. QUINTANILLA crosses and stands on the first or second step of the throne, to the L. of it. TALAVERA stands between them and COLUMBUS. RODRIGUEZ approaches the throne, but remains below it, on L. The two sovereigns are of medium height, dignified, energetic, and inured to hardship. The KING has a strong sunburnt face and bright chestnut hair. A very able man, ambitious, unscrupulous, shrewd, and cold, he speaks quickly and sharply. The QUEEN, ruler of Castile in her own right, is as capable and resolute as her husband, but more gentle and devoutly religious. She has an attractive face, with a clear pink complexion, and a pleasant voice.] The matter of Señor Colon's petition, sire.

[COLUMBUS bows and moves a step nearer the throne.

KING [eyeing COLUMBUS shrewdly]. Yes. [To TALAVERA] The Junta has examined this question, Father?

TALAVERA [bowing]. Yes, your Majesty. [Fixing his pince-nez and opening the scroll] Their report is here.

KING. Proceed.

TALAVERA [reading]. Whereas it hath pleased his Mos Illustrious Majesty, whom Heaven preserve, Ferdinand King of Castile and Aragon, Leon, Valenzia, Catalonia and Majorca, Hammer of the Infidel, Ever Victorious in Battle——

KING [drily]. We wish we were. Is the report long?

TALAVERA. It is perhaps somewhat long, your Majesty. The Junta deliberated with care, and there was much disputation with Señor Colon and much quotation from fathers of the Church and philosophers of antiquity.

KING. Our Council meets at noon. This business must be dispatched.

QUEEN. We will hear all when time permits, Father. We are much interested in this matter.

KING. Give us now simply your findings and your reasons.

TALavera [*closing the scroll*]. We admit, your Majesty, that there is much truth in what Señor Colon contends. [*Removing his pince-nez*] Men of learning agree that the world is round, and it seems therefore that ships sailing westward should come in time to the east. We are impressed also by the evidence which he has brought together that there are new lands to be discovered.

QUEEN. And there is nothing heretical in this?

TALavera. Nothing, madam. Señor Colon is a faithful son of Holy Church.

QUINTANILLA. I can vouch for him, madam, as a gentleman honourable and devout.

NAVA [*under his breath*]. Gentleman!

COLUMBUS [*with an angry glance at NAVA*]. Indeed, madam, the prophet Esdras and many reverend fathers support what I claim in this matter.

[TALavera nods gravely in confirmation.]

KING [*to TALavera*]. You agree, then?

TALavera. No, your Majesty. [COLUMBUS is about to protest. The KING stops him with a gesture.] The Junta included navigators of much experience as well as men of learning, and we are agreed that no ship could sail so far. The great size of the globe, as Ptolemy computes it——

COLUMBUS [*turning on him*]. Ptolemy is wrong. Have I not shown from Marinus of Tyre——

QUINTANILLA [*warningly*]. Señor!

[COLUMBUS glances at the KING's face and stops short.]

TALavera. And if any ship could survive the perils of the Sea of Darkness, which no ship has done, what lies beyond? It is held by many that there are lands given up to devils.

COLUMBUS. Your Majesty, the island of the blessed Saint Brendan himself has been seen——

KING [*silencing him again with a slight movement of the hand*]. Have you anything to say which the Junta has not heard?

COLUMBUS [*reluctantly*]. No.

KING. Then be silent. You try our patience.

NAVA. He has tried the patience of many of us, sire, beyond endurance.

KING [*equally displeased with this interruption*]. It is news that you have any patience, Rodriguez. [*To TALAVERA*] Proceed.

TALAVERA [*continuing calmly*]. Other men of learning maintain that the Antipodes are inhabited only by monsters and by savages whose heads grow beneath their shoulders.

KING. But if the Indies were reached, and the Kingdom of Prester John? When we first gave him audience, Señor Colon made much of the riches which he would bring back from this voyage.

TALAVERA. Riches he might find, but he could never bring them back. What ship which had sailed so far across the sea of storms and darkness could hope to win its way back again up the slope of the earth? It is beyond the bounds of possibility. And what would befall the Christian souls so lost? In all duty and humility the Junta maintains, your Majesty, that this venture could end only in disaster.

KING [*thoughtfully*]. So. [*He looks curiously at COLUMBUS.*] But you, Señor, after all that our most learned fathers can say—you still believe that you can make this voyage.

COLUMBUS. I do not believe. I *know*.

KING [*still studying COLUMBUS intently: speaking half to himself*]. But—ships and men.

COLUMBUS. Two ships, your Majesty. A mere handful of men. If I fail, nothing more. If I succeed, glory for your Majesty above all the kings of the earth, wealth

undreamed of. And the terms I have set down for your signature——

KING [*astounded*]. You have set down——!

COLUMBUS [*simply*]. Terms of agreement. I seek first the glory of bringing a new world into knowledge of the one true Faith. Next, to myself and to my heirs in perpetuity a tenth part of all moneys and profits derived from the new lands I shall discover, with the right also to contribute an eighth part of the expenses of every expedition and to receive in return a further eighth part of all profits: the office and title of Viceroy and Governor-General in all continents and islands which I shall bring under the flag of Spain, and the office and title of High Admiral of the Ocean Seas, to rank with the High Admiral of Castile.

[*The KING sits back a little in his chair. There is a moment's dead silence while every one stares, dumbfounded, at COLUMBUS. He stands as motionless as the rest, meeting the KING's gaze without flinching.*]

NAVA. Do you wonder, sire, that the children in the streets call after this man? Our Spanish sun has been too much for his Genoese brain.

KING. You must be right, Rodriguez.

QUINTANILLA. Señor, you do not know what you ask.

COLUMBUS. I know well, my lord. I do not speak hastily.

QUINTANILLA. But——

COLUMBUS. I offer Spain an empire.

KING. And if you found this dream-empire of yours, you might be rich beyond any subject in Christendom?

COLUMBUS. Yes.

NAVA. A Genoese, a weaver's son, richer than any grandee of Spain!

QUEEN. Wealthier than the Medici. What would you do with such fabulous wealth, Señor?

COLUMBUS. Raise the banner of the Cross once again,

Madam, sweep the Saracen from the Holy Land, and give the keys of Our Lord's Sepulchre into the keeping of Holy Church. This I swore to do at Baza, when the Soldan of Egypt sent his insulting embassy to your Majesties, and this I will do.

QUEEN [*favourably impressed*]. Ah!

KING [*frowning*]. You do not lack presumption, Señor.

COLUMBUS. Sire!

QUINTANILLA. You will abate your demands.

COLUMBUS. Not one jot.

QUINTANILLA. But consider——

COLUMBUS. I have considered—for eighteen years. [*To the KING, pleading*] Your Majesty, I offer you renown and empire such as no christened king has ever known. And if I fail—but I shall not fail—I ask nothing—nothing——

KING. Except ships and men and money which we cannot spare, to waste upon the wildest venture ever made by man. No!

COLUMBUS [*aghast*]. Sire! You must not answer me thus. Before you give your last word hear me again.

KING. You have our last word. This audience is ended.

[*For a moment COLUMBUS droops as though grown suddenly older. Then he bows very slightly to the KING, straightens himself, and looks slowly from face to face as though in challenge.*]

NAVA [*exultant*]. Are you answered, dreamer?

COLUMBUS [*strongly and quietly*]. I am answered. I know now that the man whom God has chosen is not among you. But I shall find him, though I have to search through the length of Christendom to the frozen plains of Muscovy. Think not that I shall fail. It is now eighteen years since God set me upon this quest. I have followed it through danger and contempt, poverty and suffering, and always when my courage faltered word has come to me, through Holy Writ, through the teachings of the

wise, in dreams and visions, even in the voices of wind and sea—the word that this quest is mine. [*With growing exaltation*] For this came I into the world, because this was ordained before the world was made. The will of God cannot be defeated. Somewhere I shall find the monarch who has been chosen to set me on my way. Call me an idle dreamer: so was Joseph a dreamer. Stone me hence if you will: so were the prophets stoned. There beyond the western seas a new world is waiting. I shall find it. And when all you who spurn me now are forgotten dust the nations shall remember me, the first of christened men to voyage thither.

[The spell of his passionate sincerity holds them all for a moment. As he turns and walks to the door, none of them moves or speaks. He lifts the curtain to pass out, and the QUEEN, suddenly leaning forward, breaks the silence.]

QUEEN. Wait. [*COLUMBUS turns, and his eyes meet hers. Drawn by their gaze he approaches the foot of the throne. She rises slowly to her feet and comes down to the bottom step of the throne to meet him.*] I believe in you. I will give you ships.

COLUMBUS. Madam!

[His voice breaks. She offers him her hand, and he raises it to his lips.]

QUINTANILLA. Madam, is this——?

KING [*silencing him with a gesture*]. And the money?

QUEEN [*with a step backward and upward as she half turns to face him*]. This last campaign has drained my treasury as dry as yours, my lord. But my heart tells me that this man is right. Before God, he shall have my crown and jewels, if need be, to find him in ships and men for this venture.

[COLUMBUS kneels at her feet as the curtain slowly falls.]

CURTAIN

PALISSY THE POTTER

By C. H. ABRAHALL

CHARACTERS

BERNARD PALISSY, *a French potter*
MADAME PALISSY, *his wife*
PETRO, *the eldest son*
JEAN, *another son*
LUCIA, *another son*
CONSTABLE DE MONTMORENCY, *a nobleman*
HENRY III, *King of France*
ARMUND, *a condemned heretic*
MAGISTRATE, *of the Court of Bordeaux*
USHER, *of the Court of Bordeaux*
OLD HAG
PIERRE, *an informer, uncle of Armund*
INTRUDER, *a spy of the Guise*
PAGES, GUARDS, CROWD

LIST OF PROPERTIES

Bowl of fruit
Painted glass
Two coins
Paint-brushes and palette
Casket
Two white glazed pieces of pottery
Clay earthenware pot
Broken pieces of flower-pots
Wood for furnace
Tankard and jug
Five glasses
Coloured shawls or drapery
Quill pen and scroll
Four swords
Heavy chain
Warder's keys
Furnace

Note.—The furnace can be made from a three-ply tea-chest and covered with small strips of lino to give brick effect.

The effect of white glazed pottery can be obtained by lacquering cheap vases.

PALISSY THE POTTER¹

SCENE I

PALISSY's studio, in Saintes. The year is 1535. Plain drop curtain as background. Two pairs of wings, L. and R. Spanish shawls of bright colourings or drapings can be flung over them. PALISSY's work-bench C. and stool. Small table D.L. and chair. Exits up R. and up L. Some painted-glass vases and some canvasses are about the studio. On PALISSY's bench are his brushes and paints and some glass.

Discovered: PALISSY, a young artist, in paint-smeared overall, at work painting a pane of glass. He does not look up as MADAME PALISSY, his wife, enters, carrying a bowl of fruit.

MADAME PALISSY. Bernard, the children will be home soon.

PALISSY. What of it, my dear?

MADAME PALISSY. You have not yet fetched the man to repair the ceiling. We must have our meal in here.

PALISSY [*impatiently*]. I have work to do.

MADAME PALISSY. Work, indeed! If you would keep to your land-measuring, instead of painting that silly glass, we should be better off!

PALISSY. I do not like to measure land. I am at heart an artist.

¹ Requests for permission to perform this play should be sent to Messrs George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 182 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Full particulars should be given at the time of making the request.

MADAME PALISSY. Yet the King himself has chosen you to measure his salt-mines for the new salt-tax!

PALISSY. They are better untaxed! But since we have to eat, I suppose I shall have to accept the task.

MADAME PALISSY [*looking over her husband's shoulder*]. It is not that I doubt your skill, but our three children have to be clothed and fed—a fact which seems to escape you very often. Petro also must be apprenticed to something.

PALISSY [*laughing suddenly*]. Well do I know it!

[*There comes a noise from without. Two small BOYS run into the room, trying to reach their father first.*]

LUCIA. Father, some one has come to see you!

JEAN. Let me tell him, Lucia, I saw him first!

LUCIA. No, I did!

PALISSY. Cease this quarrelling. Speak, Lucia.

LUCIA. A nobleman has arrived at our door.

MADAME PALISSY [*in a flutter*]. Why did not you speak sooner? [*She goes out up L. hurriedly.*]

PALISSY. Does he ask for me?

JEAN. Yes, Father. And he has a fine carriage with two black horses. Men-at-arms ride with him. He gave us a coin each!

PALISSY. Then get you gone, and spend it. Where is Petro?

LUCIA. Monsieur Jacques asked him to fetch his cows. Let's go and tell him, Jean.

[*Exit the two boys up R. as MADAME PALISSY re-enters up L.*]

MADAME PALISSY [*excitedly*]. Bernard, it is the Constable de Montmorency. [*Turning to the door*] Come in, my lord. You must forgive our poor abode. My husband is but a struggling artist.

[*She curtsies as MONTMORENCY enters, gaily dressed in doublet and hose, short cape and sword. He walks with a long stick, and is followed by a PAGE carrying a casket.*]

MONTMORENCY. Madame, your husband's skill is well known to me. That is why I have come to seek him.

PALISSY [*rising and bowing*]. My lord, you honour me.

MONTMORENCY. Not so, good sir. I would test your skill. Do you paint portraits?

PALISSY. That is my endeavour.

MONTMORENCY. Then to-morrow you shall come and paint mine.

PALISSY. But, my lord, my hand is not skilled enough to do you justice!

MONTMORENCY. I have seen your work, and can be judge of that. But now I would have your opinion upon a piece of pottery of rare beauty, which I collected on my travels in Italy.

[*He turns to his PAGE, who lifts the lid of the casket.*

MONTMORENCY *then takes out a beautiful white glazed work of art. He puts it on the table and steps back, watching PALISSY. PALISSY does not speak for a minute but looks at it in silence. Then he touches it lingeringly.*

PALISSY. It has the whiteness of the breast of a dove! What master-hand created it?

MONTMORENCY. Some say an artist, by name, della Robbia. But for my part, I think it is of Chinese craft.

PALISSY [*dreamily*]. Would that I could find the secret of its whiteness!

MONTMORENCY. It is a process little known as yet—one might say a lost art. Why not try, my friend?

PALISSY. If I could cover clay with such a substance, I would feel my life had not been in vain!

MONTMORENCY [*pleased*]. Then you appreciate my treasure. I paid highly for it, and count myself some judge.

PALISSY. It holds such beauty for me that I would gladly devote the rest of my life to discovering its secret.

[He watches it longingly as MONTMORENCY puts it back in the casket.]

MONTMORENCY. To-morrow you will examine it more closely. If you succeed in making the compound, you will tile a pavement for my new villa.

PALISSY. I shall not rest until the secret is in my grasp.

MONTMORENCY. Then adieu, sir, until to-morrow.

[They bow to each other, and MONTMORENCY goes out with MADAME PALISSY. PALISSY strides up and down, deep in thought. Suddenly he turns and sweeps his bench clear of everything, just as his WIFE re-enters.]

MADAME PALISSY *[in alarm]*. What madness seizes you?

PALISSY *[a little wildly]*. If it be madness, it is the madness to create. I have seen a substance of such rare whiteness that the beauty of it has me by the heart. I shall not rest until I can make it with these hands!

[He holds them before him, shaking them in his excitement.]

MADAME PALISSY. But the children, Bernard, and the salt-mines! You cannot afford to experiment!

PALISSY. Speak no more of salt-mines. I have done with them! *[He picks up a clay pot.]* To the beautifying of this clay I dedicate my life!

[He raises it dramatically before him.]

QUICK CURTAIN

SCENE II

PALISSY's studio in Saintes. The year is 1545. The studio is cleared of everything but his work-bench, C. Pieces of broken pottery are on it, daubed with various compounds. There are two shabby chairs, one of which is to be broken later as firewood. R.C. stands the furnace

D.L. *small table with tankard and jug upon it. Exits up R. and up L.*

Discovered: PETRO, a boy of thirteen, dirty and stripped to the waist. He has fallen asleep, his head on some logs R.C. PALISSY, very ragged and unkempt, is busy covering a piece of pottery with clay. His friend, JACQUES, an innkeeper, older than PALISSY and very stout, noiselessly enters up L. PALISSY speaks to PETRO without looking up.

PALISSY. Petro, put more fuel on the furnace. If the heat lessens, those three hundred different compounds will spoil.

JACQUES [*looking down on the sleeping PETRO*]. The boy sleeps. You have worn him out!

PALISSY [*turning angrily*]. Must you creep in on me?

JACQUES. You are nervy, my friend.

PALISSY [*going to him*]. Forgive me, Jacques, I am on edge. [*He goes to PETRO and stirs him with his foot.*] Wake up, boy, you are no help to me asleep. Be off to bed.

PETRO [*starting up*]. But, Father—the furnace.

PALISSY. I will tend it now—be off, I say.

PETRO. Yes, Father. I am hungry, are you?

PALISSY [*impatiently*]. To-morrow we will eat.

JACQUES [*sitting, as PETRO goes out up R.*]. How long must this quest go on? For ten years your family have suffered hardships, while you persist in this madness.

PALISSY. To-night is no time to taunt me with my failure. For weeks past I have been on the verge of success, but just as I think to have corrected the failure of the time before, I am defeated.

JACQUES. Always it has been so.

PALISSY [*with heat*]. That is not so! Two years ago, after I had returned to the soul-destroying work of land-measuring, I achieved this! [*He holds up a broken bit of pottery covered with a white substance.*] It gave me courage

to go on, to throw up land-measuring again. I had saved enough to tide us over.

JACQUES. And to-night?

PALISSY. I have promised my wife if I do not succeed that I will acknowledge my failure and give up the quest. It will be hard to do, Jacques. An artist should not marry—there have to be too many sacrifices.

JACQUES. At last you see reason! The price of fuel makes your task impossible. You cannot go on indefinitely. Last year I thought you would not survive that illness.

PALISSY. It was tending the furnace in the brickyards, because I could not afford to run my own. I got soaked day after day. But now I am well again.

JACQUES. And if you are successful to-night, what of it?

PALISSY. This time I have written down the substance of every compound used. I shall make no mistake. The secret will be mine at last. My family will be rich and thank me.

JACQUES. You let your dreams get the better of you. [PALISSY *wearily picks up more wood and throws it into the furnace. Then he staggers suddenly. JACQUES hurries to him and supports him to a chair. Then, as PALISSY collapses across the table, JACQUES quickly pours out a drink.*] Here, drink this—you are exhausted!

[*He puts an arm round his and holds the goblet to his lips.*]

PALISSY [*drinks a little, then pushes it away*]. It was but passing. The soul within me tells me that I do right to struggle on. Yet the years that have passed have done much to break me. My friends give me black looks; people murmur in the streets when I pass; they blame me that my wife has lost her looks, and grown pale in my service! [*Getting up and pacing the floor.*] But I know that I can give to the world beauty that will last!

JACQUES. The world has little time for dreamers. It

must see results. [*Rising*] But may fortune favour you this night. I must be on my way.

PALISSY [*taking his hand*]. Good night to you. One day I will repay you all I owe.

JACQUES. Good night, my friend. Although I rail against you, you have my faith. I think you a fool—but a fine fool.

[*He goes out up L., and PALISSY looks through the glass door of his furnace again. MADAME PALISSY enters up R. with some bread on a platter and a goblet. She is white and poorly clad.*]

MADAME PALISSY. Bernard, you have not eaten all day.

PALISSY [*looking up from the furnace-door*]. The substance won't melt—nothing will make it melt!

MADAME PALISSY [*wearily*]. I do not know how often I have heard you say that, these last ten years.

PALISSY [*wildly*]. But this is my last chance! My credit is gone—I can borrow no more money. Without fuel I cannot bake!

MADAME PALISSY. Maybe it is for the best.

PALISSY. Yet still I will make you proud of me.

[*Puts on more fuel.*]

MADAME PALISSY. Bernard, there are ugly rumours about.

PALISSY. What are they?

MADAME PALISSY. There are fresh outbreaks against the Protestants.

PALISSY [*back at his bench. With a shrug*]. It will pass.

MADAME PALISSY. There are stories of burnings at the stake.

PALISSY [*seeing she is worried, goes to her*]. Do not fret yourself. No one will trouble about a poor artist and his family. It is the rich they would burn. Now leave me to my work.

MADAME PALISSY [*rising*]. Your fuel is getting low.

PALISSY. I can buy no more. [*He goes to the oven, looks through the door, then cries excitedly*] The compound is melting! Look through the door!

[*MADAME PALISSY runs forward and looks in.*

MADAME PALISSY. Will it be white?

PALISSY [*pushing her out of the way*]. It has that look. It is the heat that matters now. Go—go, I must be alone! [*MADAME PALISSY hurries out up L., looking a little scared by his manner. PALISSY throws more wood into the furnace, until there is none left. He looks round frantically.*] Wood I must have more! [*He runs to the exit up L.*] Petro—Lucia [*as they rush in*—fetch me more wood!

MADAME PALISSY [*returning up L.*]. How can they? There is no more.

PALISSY. I *must* have it! Success is at hand! Tear up the palings! Give me that chair!

MADAME PALISSY [*trying to save it*]. No—Bernard, stop, I beg you. It is our home!

[*But he snatches it from her and smashes it.*

PALISSY [*throwing bits into the furnace*]. Wood, more wood! [*He works feverishly.*

MADAME PALISSY [*to the boys*]. Run from the house—fetch the neighbours. Your father is mad! His reason has left him! [*She runs from the room up L. crying.*] My husband, my poor husband! [*The boys follow.*

PETRO [*returning with some stair-rails*]. I tore these up, Father.

PALISSY [*watching the oven*]. Feed the flame, Petro—feed it. I was right—I knew I was right! More wood! Quickly—more wood! It is the heat which matters now. See, Petro, how well the substance melts.

PETRO [*after a quick look*]. I will find more fuel.

PALISSY. Quickly—quickly! We are near the end!

[*As PETRO turns to go, MADAME PALISSY re-enters up L. followed by the NEIGHBOURS.*

MADAME PALISSY. Bernard, this must stop!

PALISSY [*making for those who try to restrain him*]. Out of here, I say!

[*He looks wild and deranged, and holds a bit of wood in his hand as if he would strike them.*]

PETRO [*from the furnace*]. Father—look!

[PALISSY *rushes to the oven and peers in. Then suddenly he throws up his arms in triumph.*]

PALISSY. It is done—I have found the compound! See—all of you who have doubted and scoffed, denied me wood and laughed at my art—I have found what I was seeking!

[*He draws from the oven a tray and carries it to his bench. On it stands a vase coated with a white substance. At that moment JACQUES enters up L. and forces his way through the crowd.*]

JACQUES. My friend—my friend! It is true, then, that you have found the compound?

[*He flings an arm round PALISSY.*]

PALISSY. Jacques, I am so happy—I am so happy!

[*Once again the group is disturbed, and the CONSTABLE DE MONTMORENCY enters up L.*]

MONTMORENCY. News travels fast, my friend. I see by your face Palissy, that I have heard aright. [*He walks round the vase, looking at it closely.*] It is beautiful—beautiful! You have indeed discovered a new art for France.

PALISSY [*bowing*]. You honour me, my lord. Yet—even yet it is not perfect.

MONTMORENCY. Then go forward in your work. You will have my support. [*Turning to the others*] Come, my friends, the potter is a weary man.

[*His hand rests for a moment on PALISSY's shoulder, then he goes out, followed by all but MADAME PALISSY. BERNARD sits wearily L.C. while MADAME PALISSY quietly pushes the boys from the room.*]

MADAME PALISSY [*as she returns*]. You heard what the Constable said, Bernard?

PALISSY [*with a smile, holds out his hand to her. She comes and sits at his feet*]. Your troubles are over now, my dear. I can soon repay you.

MADAME PALISSY [*nodding towards the vase*]. That has repaid me, Bernard. You will be great, now!

PALISSY. Great! The Almighty Who created wonders of heaven and earth which are open to all is great, my dear. It was from His handiwork I learnt my craving for beauty, for as a boy I had no books of learning. It is He we should call great—not I, who have created so small a thing. [*Rising*] Come, let us go and thank Him together.

[*He puts his arm round her to lead her off up R.*]

QUICK CURTAIN

SCENE III

PALISSY's studio in Saintes. The year is 1550. The studio is better furnished. Trestle-table C. Five chairs or stools. Furnace R.C. Small table D.L., on which stand a few pieces of finished pottery. Exits are up R. and up L.

Discovered: A meal is in progress. Dessert has been reached.

PALISSY, cracking a nut, sits R.C. He is dressed in doublet and hose. MADAME PALISSY L.C. PETRO up C. LUCIA D.R.C. JEAN D.L.C. All look older and better dressed.

PETRO [*rising*]. Father, I have a toast.

PALISSY. To whom, Petro?

PETRO. To you, Father. Five years ago to-day you broke up the furniture and won success.

PALISSY [*with a laugh*]. And most of you ran screaming from the room, declaring I was mad. A nice reward!

MADAME PALISSY [*also laughing*]. It was not to be wondered at!

PETRO [*raising his glass*]. Your health, Father!

[*They all stand and drink.*]

PALISSY. Thank you, all of you. [*As they settle down*]
And now I have some news for you.

JEAN. What is it?

PALISSY. The tiling for the Constable de Montmorncy's new villa is almost complete. We shall be richer still.

MADAME PALISSY. We are comfortable as we are. You are famous and much sought after. [*From outside comes a murmur from the street. People are shouting. MADAME PALISSY rises.*] What is that?

[*She turns to the window L.C., but PETRO is before her.*]

PETRO [*stopping her*]. Keep away from the window, Mother.

MADAME PALISSY. Why, my son?

PETRO. There is trouble afoot.

MADAME PALISSY [*in alarm*]. The Catholics?

PETRO. Yes—they persecute the Protestants and drive them from their homes.

MADAME PALISSY. Then we——

PALISSY [*going to her and placing an arm round her*]. We are safe as yet, my dear.

MADAME PALISSY. Only if you have been cautious, Bernard, and not voiced your views.

PALISSY. No man shall make me deny my God! [*The noise grows, then passes.*] Come, all of you, there is nothing to fear. Let us have some music.

LUCIA. What shall we sing?

PALISSY. What about *The Teams are waiting in the Field*?

LUCIA. Come, Mother—take heart. Will you not give us the note?

[*They settle round her and begin to sing. As the song nearly ends, JACQUES rushes in up L.*]

JACQUES. Quick! Bernard, fly for your life! Information has been laid against you!

PALISSY [*starting up*]. How so?

JACQUES. The uncle of Armund, whom you converted, has informed against you and roused the people to a fury. They are on their way to take you away. Already the rabble cry for your death.

MADAME PALISSY [*clinging to him*]. Bernard!

[*She hides her head against him.*]

PALISSY. Have no fear! [*To JACQUES*] It is too late for me to go. I will face the charge. Take my family to safety—there is nothing against them. Petro, look after your mother.

PETRO. But, Father——

PALISSY. Go quickly—your place is by her side. Quick, down the back way! They will not harm me.

[*He embraces his WIFE. PETRO puts an arm round her as PALISSY and JACQUES hasten the party out up R. PALISSY returns and picks up a piece of pottery just as the GUARDS enter up L., followed by a mob.*]

GUARD. Are you Bernard Palissy?

PALISSY. That is my name.

GUARD. We arrest you as a heretic, in the King's name!

PALISSY [*putting down his work*]. I am prepared to answer the charge.

[*He shakes the GUARD's hand from his shoulder, then, with head high, he pushes past the mob, who murmur, and goes out up L., followed by the GUARDS.*]

MOB [*joyously*]. Down with the heretic! To the stake with him!

[*They begin to wreck the room.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE IV

The court-room at Bordeaux. The year is 1550. R.C. raised desk covered with a cloth for the JUDGE. The dock up C. Three forms stand up L. to D.L. Exit up L. Discovered: The JUDGE is seated. The USHER stands close to him. In the dock stands ARMUND, a bloodstained handkerchief round his forehead. His trial is coming to an end. A GUARD stands L. The benches are filled with the RABBLE.

VOICE [*as the curtain rises*]. Give us the prisoner, Armund!

MOB. To the stake with him!

JUDGE [*to the prisoner*]. Monsieur Armund, you have heard the evidence against you, and how they cry for justice?

ARMUND. Justice? There is no justice!

JUDGE. We have proved you a heretic, and now you speak against the King's court. [*To the GUARD*] To the stake with him!

ARMUND [*shaking off the GUARD*]. The flame cannot destroy my faith, or the faith of those who come after me.

JUDGE. Away with him.

CROWD. To the stake! Burn him!

[*ARMUND walks before the GUARD. Some of the MOB drag at him. From outside the cry is taken up, as he goes out up L.*

USHER. Silence in court!

JUDGE. Bring in the prisoner, Bernard Palissy.

[*There is a stir as PALISSY enters up L.*

OLD HAG [*stepping forward from the RABBLE and leering in his face*]. You will burn as your furnace burns!

[*She laughs horribly. The GUARD forces her back. PALISSY ignores her and enters the dock.*

JUDGE. You are Bernard Palissy, a potter by profession?

PALISSY. After many years of striving I humbly call myself so.

JUDGE. You are also a writer?

PALISSY. In my spare time it pleases me to write.

JUDGE. Of what do you write, Monsieur Palissy?

PALISSY. Of my craft, and of nature.

PIERRE [*jumping up from the benches*]. That is a lie! He writes to denounce witchcraft and astrology. I have words of his here! [*He waves a paper excitedly.*]

JUDGE. Give me that. [*It is handed up.*] How did you come by this?

PIERRE. I—I——

PALISSY. Tell the Judge I owed you money, and could not pay. You accepted that to print, and hoped to gain some profit.

PIERRE. That is not true. With smooth words you incited me to print it, and pass among the taverns.

PALISSY. If that be true, you stand convicted as my accomplice!

PIERRE [*excitedly to JUDGE*]. Do not heed him, your honour. It was I who denounced him as a heretic. I tell you he speaks against the true religion. He converted my nephew, Armund, who was a good Catholic until he met Palissy. He now pays with his life, and I demand the prisoner shares the same fate!

[*The MOB murmur excitedly.*]

JUDGE. I have heard enough. [*To PALISSY as he taps the paper in his hand*] These words incite the people against witches.

PALISSY. I would but try to turn the people from such things, and to embrace the true faith.

MOB. Heretic!

JUDGE. Be careful, Monsieur Palissy—your own words convict you. Of what faith do you speak?

PALISSY [*drawing himself up*]. I am a Protestant, my lord, and do not fear to own it.

MOB. Burn him—to the stake!

JUDGE. The fame of your work has reached me, yet by your own words you are condemned to the flame. *[There is a sudden stir in court, as the CONSTABLE DE MONTMORENCY enters up L., followed by his PAGE. The MOB, awed, cringe back.]* What do you here, my lord?

MONTMORENCY. I come to defend the prisoner in the dock.

JUDGE. He has no need of defence. He has convicted himself.

MONTMORENCY. Sir, this man is a servant of the public.

JUDGE. A Protestant dog can hold no such place!

MONTMORENCY. Even so, his life is too valuable to be given to the whims of a mob to take away. Who speaks against this man?

[He glares at the MOB, who shuffle uneasily.]

JUDGE. Is it not true, my lord, that the prisoner is busy upon some work for you?

MONTMORENCY. He is constructing a pavement of such rare beauty, which he himself has made, that the King of France, hearing of it, has bid me come in person to snatch yon beautifier of our country from the hands of the ignorant.

MOB *[murmur]*. The King—the King!

[They talk among themselves.]

MONTMORENCY. Sir, this is no ordinary man who stands before you, but one who has striven for years to bring a new industry to France.

JUDGE. Even so, he is a heretic. Yet, if he will pledge himself to renounce his faith, I see no reason——

PALISSY *[banging his fist on the dock]*. I will not deny my God!

VOICE. A heretic should not live!

MONTMORENCY. The King dictates otherwise! I have here an edict sealed by his most gracious hand. He

appoints the prisoner, Bernard Palissy, to the honour of Inventor of Rustic Figurines to the Court itself.

JUDGE. Then this removes him from the jurisdiction of Bordeaux.

PALISSY [*to MONTMORENCY*]. Sir—I thank you.

[*He steps from the dock.*]

MONTMORENCY. It is his Majesty's wish that you be lodged in the Tuileries, where you will be free to continue your art in his service.

PALISSY. You mean—as a prisoner?

MONTMORENCY. Call it so if you wish. As a heretic you cannot have your freedom.

PALISSY [*distressed*]. But I cannot work if my freedom is denied me!

MONTMORENCY. The King has decreed otherwise, Monsieur!

MOB [*rising*]. Long live the King! Long live the King!

QUICK CURTAIN

SCENE V

PALISSY's workroom in the Tuileries. The year is 1565.

L.C. stands his work-bench. Up R., across the corner, a low sleeping-bench. Up C. small table and chair.
Exit up L.

Discovered: PETRO is at work on some pottery as MONTMORENCY enters up L. PETRO leaves his work and bows.

MONTMORENCY. Petro, where is your father?

PETRO. He has audience with the Queen Mother, my lord.

MONTMORENCY. They keep him busy.

PETRO. He toils day and night. It seems as if he were afraid to be idle.

MONTMORENCY. Is he satisfied with his progress?

PETRO. After all these years, still he feels he has not reached perfection. But he pleases the King and Queen!

MONTMORENCY. Petro, I wish he would be more guarded in his writings. The Guise party are angered by them.

PETRO. I have warned him so often—begged him to stay his hand. But he will not heed me.

MONTMORENCY. I would I could have seen him, but I must be on my way. Add my warnings to yours, and tell him from me that his pen will get him into worse trouble than his tongue.

PETRO [*sadly*]. I will do my best.

MONTMORENCY. Adieu, my boy. Guard him well. He has many enemies.

[PETRO bows silently as MONTMORENCY goes out up L., then returns to his work. A STRANGER then pokes his head round the door.]

INTRUDER [*entering. He wears a sword, and is a perky, insolent fellow*]. Is the mud-lark, the dauber of colours, the pet dog of the King, not here?

PETRO. Have a care, sir. You speak of my father!

INTRUDER. Zounds, sir—does the potter have a son?

PETRO. By what right do you enter here?

INTRUDER. I wished to see a heretic at work!

PETRO. Is it your wish to pick a quarrel, sir?

INTRUDER. I like not your tone. For the son of a father who has once been condemned to the stake, you speak too freely.

PETRO [*stepping up to him*]. You have twice sneered at my father. I warn you—guard your tongue!

INTRUDER [*with an unpleasant laugh*]. As your father fails to guard his? I was in the tavern last night when he spoke of his doctrine. It will please the Guise to hear of it!

PETRO. So, you come to threaten! Take that, you Popish dolt! [*He strikes him with the back of his hand.*]

INTRUDER [*his hand to his sword*]. You shall answer for that!

PETRO [*picking up his from the bench and drawing*]. I am ready. Come on, sir—*en garde*, I say!

[*They start to fight as PALISSY enters up L.*

PALISSY. Here, young cockerels! Up with your swords! [*He strikes them up with his staff.*] The King is on his way here.

INTRUDER [*aghast*]. The King?

PALISSY. Ay, sir—the King. I know you not, nor like your face. Get you gone!

INTRUDER. I go—I go! [*Exit up L. hurriedly.*

PALISSY. Have a care, Petro; we are little in favour as it is.

PETRO. He came with insults.

PALISSY. The Guise party are anxious to trap us. I feel he comes from them.

PETRO. You are right, but how do you know?

PALISSY. I have my friends.

[*He turns as the sound of the KING's arrival is heard. A word of command, then the KING enters up L. PETRO and PALISSY bow low.*

HENRY. We would have speech with you, Palissy.

PALISSY [*putting a chair C.*]. I am honoured, sire.

HENRY. We are displeased.

PALISSY. With my work, sire?

HENRY. No, no, your work is superb. It is your insistence to juggle with the stake. Are you a fool, man, that you cannot curb your tongue?

PALISSY. I speak only as I feel.

HENRY. I give you protection—yet you anger the people, never letting them forget you are a Protestant. If you cannot renounce your views, at least keep silent!

PALISSY. Your Majesty, my religion is to me as important as yours is to you. I have no fear to die in its cause.

HENRY. There will come a day when I shall be forced to take you at your word. Your enemies are powerful.

PALISSY. Should that day come, sire, you will find me ready. My craft is yours, but my soul is no man's.

HENRY [*with a sudden laugh*]. You ever were a stubborn man, but on your own head be it. [*He points suddenly with his stick at a vase which stands apart on the bench.*] What have you there?

PALISSY [*picking it up and handing it to the KING*]. It is for your palace at Versailles. Does it please you, sire?

HENRY. Please me? of course it pleases me. [*He rises, and hands it back.*] That is why I keep you alive. [*As he turns to go*] But I find you the most irritating man!

[PALISSY bows as the KING starts to go.]

QUICK CURTAIN

SCENE VI

A dungeon in the Bastille. The year is 1570. A sleeping-bench C. Exit up L. Offstage the record of Ravel's "Bolero" can be played as very effective background to this scene.

Discovered: PALISSY, now very old, is chained by the leg to his bench. He is on the floor, propped against it. The WARDER enters with a bowl, and shuffles across to PALISSY. From offstage comes the cry of the MOB.

MOB [*offstage*]. Burn the heretic! Burn Palissy! To the stake with him!

PALISSY [*looking up*]. Will it never cease?

WARDER. Not till they have their way. You have cheated the flames too long. They will take no chance this time.

PALISSY. I am ready to die.

SENTRY [*from without*]. Open, in the King's name.

[*The WARDER hurries to the exit. The KING enters, followed by the WARDER, who stands at attention.*

HENRY. Bernard Palissy, once again I find you in prison.

PALISSY. For the same offence, sire. I will not deny my God.

HENRY. Five years ago I warned you that the net was closing round you. You refused to listen to me, and have published many books, which has made it impossible to help you any more. [*Turning to the WARDER*] Unchain this man, and leave us. [*He does so.*

PALISSY [*rubs his leg, then gets up with difficulty*]. The ignorance among the people, and their fear of witches, prompted me to urge them to free themselves from the spell.

HENRY. It was unwise. You have served the Queen Mother and myself well. Your enamel-work is now world-famed.

PALISSY [*bowing*]. It honours me to hear you speak so.

HENRY. For the sake of that art, we have put up with your religion amid fires and massacres. But I am now pressed by the Guise party and my own people, and tomorrow you will burn at the stake unless you become converted. I am constrained to leave you in the hands of your enemies.

PALISSY. You have said many times, sire, that you pity me; and now I pity you, who have pronounced the words, "*I am constrained*"! It is not spoken like a king, sire. But what you do, and those who constrain you—the Guisards and all your people—can never affect me, for I know how to die!

HENRY [*rising, with anger*]. I came as a friend, but I can do no more! Your words are insulting. I shall leave you to your fate!

[*With affronted dignity he sweeps to the door and goes out. PALISSY stands looking after him for a*

moment. Then from his jerkin he takes a small enamel figure, which he fondles. Then suddenly his hand goes to his heart. He staggers to his bench, sinks to the ground, and collapses. The WARDER, returning, sees him and rushes to his side. Feeling his heart, he looks up and shouts.

WARDER. Hey! Guard! [*As the GUARD runs in*] There won't be any bonfire to-morrow. The old man is dead!

[From outside the CROWD can be heard cheering the KING as he leaves. "Long live the King! Death to the heretic—death to the heretic!"

CURTAIN

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ROYAL INTERLUDE

By ELIZABETH FITZROY

CHARACTERS

JEANIE

MISTRESS BURNS

MISTRESS M'BAIN

WILLIE

THE QUEEN OF SCOTS

A SERGEANT

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ROYAL INTERLUDE¹

SCENE: *The living-room of a country house on the outskirts of a village in Galloway. Between two windows back stage stands a dresser on which plates and dishes are arranged. The fire-place is in the middle of the R. wall, and between this and the back wall is a door leading to the stairs. Opposite, in the L. wall, is another door leading to the hall and front door. A solid oak table stands in the middle of the room, and near it two high-backed chairs. Another chair stands below the fire-place. Up stage L. there is a spinning-wheel.*

TIME: *A late afternoon in May in the year 1568.*

Enter JEANIE, L., carrying a pile of freshly laundered linen, which she puts on the table. Then she sits down to her spinning. While she works, she sings. Enter quickly, R., MISTRESS BURNS, who is middle-aged and sharp-tempered.

MISTRESS BURNS [*exasperated*]. Jeanie! [*JEANIE jumps up, frightened.*] Hoo often maun I tell ye no' to gang singin' aboot the hoose like ony tapster's wench? Have ye nae memory, lass? Noo, see what ye are a-doin'—*'Twistin' a' yer threads! Here, gi'e it me—* [*She unravels the flax.*] *There—that's better. Be mair carefu' anither time. But ye maun pit a' that by the noo. I have ither wark for ye to do. What is this?*

JEANIE. *The clean linen, ma'am—*

¹ Applications regarding amateur performances of this play should be addressed to Messrs Samuel French, Ltd., 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, or 25 West 45th Street, New York.

MISTRESS BURNS. Ye could be mendin' it yersel' if ye had profited mair frae my instruction. Aweel, run awa'—— Time's too precious to be wasted idlin' about. When ye have washed the dishes, ye can gang oot into the garden an' choose me some nice sweet herbs. [JEANIE *is about to leave the room.*] Jeanie—— Come here. What was it ye war singin' when I came in? Mind, noo, I want the truth.

JEANIE. A song, ma'am—— Just naethin' at a' but a simple song.

MISTRESS BURNS. I have heard ye sing this same simple song afore, my bairn. What is it? I insist on yer tellin' me.

JEANIE. I dinna' mind what it's ca'ed, Mistress, truly.

MISTRESS BURNS. Whaur did ye learn it, lass?

JEANIE [*almost in tears*]. I meant nae harm—— It's a silly thing. I niver thocht——

MISTRESS BURNS. Exactly, an' if ye war to think a little mair it wad be the better for ye. Noo, Jeanie, whaur did ye pick it up?

JEANIE. I've heard it ca'ed Queen Mary's song—— Ah, Mistress——

MISTRESS BURNS [*threatening her with uplifted hand*]. Jeanie! Ye dare say that—in my hoose! Ye—the dochter of a God-fearin', honest man! Och, fie—— Ye ought to be ashamed o' yersel'. To think I should hear that vile name on the lips o' a lass that I have luiked upon as my ain flesh an' blood an' fed at my table.

JEANIE. I meant nae harm. Indeed, indeed——

MISTRESS BURNS. Wha taught ye this wickedness?

JEANIE [*after a moment's hesitation*]. I—I dinna' remember—I've heard it somewhere.

MISTRESS BURNS. Weel, Jeanie, I gie ye fair warnin' here an' noo. If iver I hear ye sing this song again, or the like o' it, Maister Burns maun make ither arrangements. I'll have nae papists in my hoose. Do ye understand?

JEANIE. Ay, ma'am.

MISTRESS BURNS. Noo, be off wi' ye, an' see to it that ye remember.

[JEANIE goes out L. MISTRESS BURNS begins to look over the linen. Presently she fetches her work-box, draws a chair to the table, and settles down to her mending. Re-enter JEANIE.]

JEANIE. Please, ma'am, it's Mistress M'Bain has come.

MISTRESS BURNS. Show her in, show her in.

[Enter MISTRESS M'BAIN, genial and talkative.]

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Guid efternune, Mistress Burns, an' have ye heard the news?

MISTRESS BURNS. Guid efternune, Mistress M'Bain. What news may that be? [To JEANIE, who is lingering at the door] Is the wark goin' to do itsel' to-day, Jeanie? [Exit JEANIE.] Pray, tak' a seat, Mistress M'Bain. As ye war sayin'—

MISTRESS M'BAIN. The news, wumman, the great news. I had it frae Maister Weir, wha was told by Maister Heatherstone, wha had it frae his brither the lawyer.

MISTRESS BURNS [sarcastically]. Indeed!

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Mistress, what do ye think? I swear ye wad niver guess if I gied ye a dozen chances. The Queen has escaped frae Loch Leven Castle!

MISTRESS BURNS [unmoved]. Ye dinna' say so.

MISTRESS M'BAIN. But, Mistress, did ye iver hear the like? The Queen has escaped. Thousands have already gathered roond her standard.

MISTRESS BURNS [coldly]. Maister Burns is no' at hame at present. Nae doot he will bring back the true tidin's.

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Indeed an' it is the truth I am tellin' ye. At this very moment the Queen may be in Edinburgh.

MISTRESS BURNS. Hoots, wumman, the folk wad burn her for a witch an' waur. They'll have nae mair o' the Stuart queen.

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Hoo can ye say sic dreadfu' things? After a', ye canna' deny she is our lawfu' queen.

MISTRESS BURNS. Lawfu' queen! Fine talk! Murderess an' heretic that she is. I am surprised at ye, Mistress M'Bain, I wad have credited ye wi' mair sense.

MISTRESS M'BAIN [*offended*]. Och, I'm no defendin' her, Mistress Burns, nor her religion neyther. But I am sorry for her, puir misguided thing. Folk say she is awfu' bonny.

MISTRESS BURNS. Some folk may say so, but when I saw her come ridin' doon the Canongate wi' a' her followers left half a mile behind, I didna' think much on her appearance. It's just of a piece, Mistress, wi' her murderin' ways. Papists are a' alike.

MISTRESS M'BAIN. But a papist can be an honest man forby?

MISTRESS BURNS. That I'll niver believe. Why, Mistress, have I no' been married to Maister Burns these thirty years an' had a' the public news there was to be had first hand, an' when have I yince heard a guid thing o' a papist? Nae, nae—— Ye canna' convince me.

MISTRESS M'BAIN. But, papist or nae—while the Queen was still on her throne, she was beloved—an' the state prospered.

MISTRESS BURNS. Hoo lang for? Och, Mistress, ye are too soft-hearted. Ye wad find excuses for the de'il himsel'.

MISTRESS M'BAIN. But what do ye think will happen noo? Will they have her to rule again?

MISTRESS BURNS. The Lord preserve us, nae—— What an idea!

MISTRESS M'BAIN. What, then?

MISTRESS BURNS. I warrant she'll find hersel' back whaur she came frae—an' pretty quick, too.

MISTRESS M'BAIN. But suppose the Queen should win?

MISTRESS BURNS. Win! What should she win?

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Will there be nae battle?

MISTRESS BURNS. Battle, indeed! A likely thing! Do ye imagine that Murray wad think it worth his while to fight a rabble of traitors an' cut-throats?

MISTRESS M'BAIN. But they say the clans are gatherin' in the north.

MISTRESS BURNS. What o' that? It can only be but a puir handfu' at best. My son, Willie, joined the King's forces some months back. [*Enter JEANIE, softly. She goes back to her spinning.*] It will be an easy matter to teach the Frenchwumman a lesson that she'll no' soon forget. Have ye washed those dishes, Jeanie?

JEANIE. Ay, ma'am.

MISTRESS BURNS. Have ye fetched in the herbs?

JEANIE. Ay, ma'am.

MISTRESS BURNS. Weel, luik to yer spinnin'—— [*A knock on the front door.*] I will gang mysel'.

[*Exit MISTRESS BURNS L., shutting the door behind her.*]

JEANIE. Mistress, pray tell me the great news—— The Queen?

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Wheesh, lassie, what has the Queen to do wi' ye?

JEANIE. Naethin', naethin', of course. That is—— I canna' say. I maun say naethin', Mistress, but tell me if ye ken onything o' her Majesty?

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Dear me, what wad your guardian say?

JEANIE. Niver mind that. Only tell me—is it true? Has the Queen escaped?

MISTRESS M'BAIN. So I'm told—— I had it frae Maister Weir, wha——

JEANIE. But, Mistress, will they have her back on her throne again?

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Why so anxious, Jeanie? It will make small difference to ye an' to me either way—Mary or Murray or King Jamie in his cradle. What matters it to us?

JEANIE. Mistress M'Bain, for me it will make a' the difference between Heaven an'——

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Indeed, Jeanie, an' I dinna' like to hear ye talk like that. Ye are as bad as ony papist. I canna listen to ye——

JEANIE [*blissfully*]. The Queen has escaped. At this moment she is free. Thank God, thank God——

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Jeanie!

JEANIE. Dinna' be so shocked, dear Mistress M'Bain—— Ye maun feel glad, too. I believe ye do in yer heart. She is so young, scarcely older than I am, an' think what they have made her suffer!

MISTRESS M'BAIN. My lassie, ye maun haud yer tongue. It's heresy—it's treason—— Dinna' ye realize that noo Mary Stuart has escaped, there will be a price on her head, an' ony person suspected o' bein' her friend will be in danger o' his life? Ay, Jeanie, ye should be glad indeed an' thankfu' that naebody heard ye but mysel'—— It's foolish to speak so thochtlessly.

JEANIE. I am happy—happy——

MISTRESS BURNS [*re-entering*]. It was only Mistress Burnett askin' for the loan o' my recipe for chicken broth—— What, idlin' again, Jeanie! Set to, set to——
[*She resumes her sewing.*]

MISTRESS M'BAIN. When are ye expectin' Maister Burns hame, Mistress? I should like fine to ken mair o' the truth.

MISTRESS BURNS. Ony day, noo—— He has been to Edinburgh on business an' will certainly ken a' there is to it.

[*Horses are heard outside at the gallop:* JEANIE jumps up and runs to the window.

JEANIE. Horses!

MISTRESS BURNS. Maybe it's Maister Burns himsel'——
[*Both LADIES go to the window.*]

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Soldiers! Noo, may the Lord have mercy on us!

MISTRESS BURNS. They will have brocht news.

MISTRESS M'BAIN. Hoo wearied the men luik. They maun have ridden hard.

MISTRESS BURNS. They'll bide in the village for a wee

rest, nae doot—— Come, Mistress M'Bain, let us follow them an' hear what they have to say.

[Exit both LADIES L. JEANIE watches them go from L. window, then comes slowly down to the table.]

JEANIE. O God—save the Queen. [A FIGURE creeps up to the R. window and taps on the pane: JEANIE, startled, turns and recognizes her cousin, WILLIE BURNS, who is travel-stained and bandaged. JEANIE throws open the window.] Willie! Ye are safe—but ye are hurt.

WILLIE. A mere scratch. Listen, Jeanie—— Are ye alone? Whaur is my mither?

JEANIE. She gaed doon to the village to hear the news the soldiers have brocht. I wunner ye didna' meet her on the road, Willie.

WILLIE. I came across the fields. Let me in an' I'll tell ye mair. [JEANIE shuts the window and goes to the door L., admitting WILLIE and another BOY in page's clothes. WILLIE bows to his companion.] My cousin, madam, an' a loving subject o' yer grace.

JEANIE. The Queen! [She kisses MARY's hand.]

MARY. What new madness is this, Willie?

WILLIE. Madam, here ye shall be safe.

MARY. I am not thinking of that, my friend, but trouble always comes to those who are faithful to me. I fear for my servants, for you—for this child.

WILLIE. All will be well, madam. Niver fear. Jeanie, is there ony wine in the hoose?

JEANIE. In the cupboard, cousin, but Mistress Burns has the key.

MARY [sitting down by the fire]. I need no wine.

WILLIE. Here is something better, madam—— [He takes a brandy flask from his pocket.] A glass, Jeanie.

[He pours out the brandy for the QUEEN.]

MARY. You must have some, too. You need it more than I.

WILLIE [*filling another glass*]. To yer Majesty's safe journey into England!

MARY. No, rather—to Scotland! Poor country, when shall I see you again?

WILLIE. Soon, madam—— The English queen maun send an army into the north when she hears the true tidings frae yer Majesty's lips. Within a few months these rebels will have been defeated an' Scotland will be yince mair at yer feet.

MARY. I would like to think so.

WILLIE. Hoo can it be itherwise?

MARY [*shuddering*]. But Willie, the people hate me. You weren't there. You didn't hear them howling under my window in Edinburgh that last night——

WILLIE. Forget it, madam—— Just a drunken rabble! Next time ye ride doon the Canongate, ye will be free, a Queen throned in the hearts of yer people.

MARY [*her optimism rekindled*]. You almost make me believe it, too.

WILLIE. Noo, madam, let me tell ye my reason for bringin' ye here. This hoose belongs to my parents—both fervent supporters o' the Lord Murray, in wha's army they believe me to be servin'—an', forgive me, madam, yer grace can have nae mair bitter enemies in the whole of Scotland! Why should the soldiers suspect sic a hame o' havin' provided a hiding-place for the Queen?

MARY [*amused*]. You are cunning, Willie. But I would like to know how comes the son of Murray's friend to be fighting for Mary Stuart?

WILLIE. Madam, hoo comes ony son o' Scotland to be a traitor to his Queen?

MARY. Faith, you are a courtier, too! [*To JEANIE*] Did you teach him these graces, child?

JEANIE [*embarrassed*]. Oh, yer Majesty—— He wad gladly die for ye.

MARY. On the contrary, he must live for me. What is your plan, Willie? How long do we stay here?

WILLIE. Madam, till it is dark—— Itherwise we canna' hope to get past the soldiers. [*Loud knocking on the outer door.*] Wha is it, Jeanie?

JEANIE [*at R. window*]. Murray's men!

MARY. We are lost. [*Getting up*] Never mind. Let them in—I will speak to them myself.

WILLIE. Madam, I was prepared for this. Remember—ye are hurt. Leave the rest to me. [*Louder, as he opens the door L.*] See to him, Jeanie. He is faint.

[*The QUEEN crouches in front of the fire, supported by JEANIE, and WILLIE admits a SERGEANT.*]

SERGEANT [*observing WILLIE's bandages and the QUEEN prostrate on the floor*]. Noo, what's a' this?

WILLIE. A trifling matter, Sergeant, no' worth yer attention. Guid neighbour Jock Maclaren has a heavy fist, but fortunately my head is grown hard.

SERGEANT. It will teach ye a lesson, let's hope, no' to gae brawlin' in the streets.

WILLIE. It wasna' I that began it, Sergeant. My young freend there is to blame. He started the quarrel.

SERGEANT. An' got the waurst o' it, by the luik o' him! Winded, eh? Serve him richt. Weel, weel, I have nae time to waste.

WILLIE. Will ye do me the favour of lettin' me ken yer business? I fear my mither isna' at hame at present. Can I do onything for ye?

SERGEANT [*walking about, examining the room*]. That depends, young sir—— My business has no' so much to do wi' the mistress o' the hoose as wi' twa persons believed to be in hidin' in this neighbourhood.

WILLIE. In hidin'! Guid Maister Sergeant, you interest me—— Let's hear mair o' this.

SERGEANT. Have ony strangers been admitted into this hoose to-day? Tell me that.

WILLIE. None that I ken of. What visitors have ye been receivin' behind my back, Jeanie?

JEANIE. Indeed an' there's been naebody at a' but Mistress M'Bain.

SERGEANT. My orders are to search the hoose.

WILLIE. That I'm afraid can scarcely be done in Mistress Burns's absence. Have a drink, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. Since ye suggest it, young man, I dinna' mind if I do.

WILLIE [*pouring out brandy*]. Noo, tell us yer story. What brings ye to these parts?

SERGEANT [*growing more friendly over his brandy*]. Have ye no' heard the news? Why, it's a guid tale. After the battle—if ye can ca' it a battle—Queen Mary ran awa' wi' naebody but her womenfolk for company! Imagine the feelings o' my Lord Murray to find a' traces o' his quarry gaen when he thocht himsel' on the scent. We believe she has made straight for the coast, nae doot wi' the purpose o' crossin' the Solway into England. But Murray is after her hot-foot. Between you an' me, sir, she hasna' a dog's chance.

WILLIE. I can believe that, Sergeant. I'll be bound, it wad be difficult to gie ye the slip.

SERGEANT. Ye are richt there. No mony gets awa' when yince Robert MacLachlan is on their track. [WILLIE *offers him more brandy*.] Nae, nae—— My business needs a clear head. Weel, Mistress, what are ye luikin' so wise aboot?

JEANIE [*in a flutter*]. Naethin', naethin'. I promise ye——

WILLIE [*looking down at the QUEEN*]. Is he comin' roond?

JEANIE. Ay, he'll do——

SERGEANT. Did ye say it was yer brither?

WILLIE. A freend—— I have nae brither.

SERGEANT. Weel, I maun be gettin' on. Guid day, sir,

an' I thank ye for yer hospitality. [*At the door he hesitates.*] On second thochts, I dinna' feel satisfied. Hoo can I tell ye are speakin' the truth frae yer heart? For a' I ken the Queen may be lodged in this very hoose.

WILLIE [*laughing loudly*]. Upon my life, Sergeant, it's likely indeed! If you only kenned my mither!

SERGEANT [*angrily*]. It's nae laughin' matter, young man, as ye will find oot when ye have spent a night or twa in jail!

JEANIE [*terrified*]. He means well, sir. It's nae disrespect. He was always ane to jest.

SERGEANT. Then the sooner he learns that his Majesty's officers are no' to be trifled with, the better. Come, show me the hoose.

WILLIE. As ye wish, of course. Tak' the Sergeant upstairs, Jeanie. [*Exit JEANIE, R., followed by the SERGEANT.*]

MARY [*jumping up*]. Willie, I'll not stay longer. He suspects us already. I would rather take to the heather again than be caught here like a bird in a trap.

WILLIE. Wheesh! [*Steps are heard outside the outer door.*] My mither! Madam, courage.

[*MARY sits at the table, with her back to the fire.*]

Enter MISTRESS BURNS, L.

MISTRESS BURNS. Are ye a ghost?

WILLIE. Nae, Mither—— I am alive an' well, thanks to this lad's devotion. [*The QUEEN rises unsteadily.*] Sit doon, sit doon. He's well-nigh exhausted. We have hardly eaten for twa days.

MISTRESS BURNS. Ye are wounded yersel', Willie. Let me luik to ye—— [*Busying herself with WILLIE's bandages as he sits on the opposite side of the table to the QUEEN*] What noise is that?

WILLIE [*faintly*]. Murray's men are here. They have a warrant to search the hoose. I could no' prevent them.

MISTRESS BURNS. Search my hoose! [*WILLIE falls against her.*] Och, lad—— Here, what's this? Brandy? Is it

yours, young man? [*The QUEEN shakes her head.*] Drink, Willie—— It will do ye guid.

WILLIE [*with a great effort*]. Mither, I maun tell ye. Ye see, I am wounded here an' here—an' I wad have died at Langside if it had no' been for yonder lad——

MISTRESS BURNS. Dinna' try to speak yet, Willie.

WILLIE. Ay, but I maun try. It was he who found me, an' he stopped at the risk o' his ain life to tie up my wounds as I lay there helpless, bleedin' to death.

MISTRESS BURNS. A deed o' charity.

WILLIE. An' mair—— For since his horse carried the lightest burden, he made me mount behind him to save me frae the looters who war oot a'ready robbin' freend an' foe, an' a' these days during oor flight he has luiked after me. I should niver have come hame but for him, Mither.

MISTRESS BURNS [*to the QUEEN*]. God bless ye, lad, wha'iver ye may be. I'll no' forget what ye have done for him——

[*Enter SERGEANT and JEANIE, R.*]

SERGEANT. Excuse me, madam.

MISTRESS BURNS [*rounding on him*]. And wha may ye be, an' what is yer business in my hoose?

SERGEANT. Madam, I have a warrant here for the arrest o' the Queen.

MISTRESS BURNS [*drawing herself up*]. An' pray, what has that to do wi' me?

SERGEANT. I was about to explain—if ye wad gie me time. We have guid reason to believe the Queen is hidin' in these parts.

MISTRESS BURNS [*with one look at the disguised QUEEN*]. If *that* is yer business, sir, I fail to see why ye are here.

SERGEANT. It was my duty to search yer hoose.

MISTRESS BURNS [*bursting out*]. Search my hoose! For the Queen! Why, man, have ye taken leave o' the few senses ye war endowed wi' by nature? The Queen, indeed! If I had been here, ye wad niver have crossed

my doorstep on sic a fule's errand! Do ye ken whose hoose this is? Have ye iver heard tell o' Maister Burns, an elder o' the Kirk, an' intimate friend o' John Knox hisel'? Really, an' this passes the limit o' my patience. As I live, my husband shall report ye for an interferin' insolent fellow! Be off, sir.

SERGEANT [*moving to the door L.*]. Nae offence, Mistress, nae offence. A man maun do his duty.

MISTRESS BURNS. An' ye have the impudence to ca' this yer duty! To come an' tell me to my face that I'm shelterin' the French traitress under my roof!

SERGEANT. They war my Lord Murray's orders, madam.

MISTRESS BURNS. I dinna' care wha's orders they be. I dinna' care if Murray comes hisel'. I'll tell him what I think on him. Off wi' ye.

[SERGEANT *departs*. MISTRESS BURNS *closes the door after him and comes slowly back to the table*.]

MARY [*who has risen, breaking from WILLIE's restraining hand*]. I thank you, Mistress. Do you know whom you have saved?

WILLIE [*aside*]. Noo, may Heaven be wi' us.

MISTRESS BURNS [*stonily*]. Ay—I ken.

WILLIE [*enthusiastically*]. Mither, but it was bravely done.

MISTRESS BURNS [*ignoring WILLIE—with extreme bitterness*]. Strange satisfaction, madam, ye maun feel in the service o' yer freends who break faith wi' their religion an' betray their parents in order to follow ye.

MARY. Alas, it is my misfortune that loyalty to me should be considered such a sin, for what woman is in more pitiable need of love than Scotland's queen?

MISTRESS BURNS. It wad seem to be ower late to think o' that.

MARY. Too late! Or perhaps too early. For presently I shall have more time to think. [*Going up to MISTRESS BURNS*] Mistress, do with me what you like. Call back the Sergeant. Tell him his quarry has been run to earth.

[WILLIE *protests*.] To-day or to-morrow. What difference will it make in the end?

WILLIE. Mither, ye canna' do it.

MISTRESS BURNS [*turning away from them all, standing down stage L.*]. Nae, I'll no' have that impudent rascal in my hoose again.

WILLIE [*in triumph*]. There, madam, ye are safe. I always thocht so.

MISTRESS BURNS [*turning on the QUEEN*]. Ay, ye are safe—an' ye care so much for yer ain skin as to ride to freedom through the blood o' yer country.

MARY [*patiently*]. What harm have I done you, Mistress, that you are so bitter?

MISTRESS BURNS. Is there no' enough evil said of ye to mak' ony mither's heart bitter? Ye ask, what harm!

MARY. But, Mistress, do you imagine I have been blind to the sufferings of my people? Do you think it has ever been my wish to take up arms against my own subjects? Why believe such heartlessness of one who is a woman and a mother like yourself?

MISTRESS BURNS. Mither! An' what kind o' a mither have ye been to leave yer bairn to strangers while ye play fast an' loose wi' foreigners?

MARY [*angrily*]. This is too much.

WILLIE. Madam, madam. [*To MISTRESS BURNS*] Mither, hoo can ye speak so to her Majesty? Have ye forgotten she saved my life—ay, an' at the risk o' her ain?

MARY. Hush, Willie—— Speak no more of that. Is it not time for us to start?

WILLIE. Ay, madam, it is nearly dark. We should be gaun'. [*He holds the QUEEN's cloak for her.*]

MISTRESS BURNS [*watching them*]. Pray, dinna' hurry on my account. I'll not betray ye—even though ye have stolen frae me a' that I haud maist precious, an' I'll pray that—for a' yer wickedness—ye may niver ken what it is to be deceived in yer ain bairn.

WILLIE. Mither, I——

MISTRESS BURNS. Ye have broken my heart.

WILLIE. But, Mither——

MISTRESS BURNS. Dinna' ca' me that. Ye have forfeited the richt.

MARY. Mistress, you are hard.

WILLIE [*hastily*]. Dinna' grieve for me, madam. I—I care for nocht but yer Majesty's safety. Let us be off.

JEANIE. Oh, madam, do ye travel far?

[MISTRESS BURNS *turns her back on them*.]

MARY. A long way, indeed, but if God sees fit He will shorten my journey.

JEANIE [*in despair*]. Let me gang, too.

WILLIE. Jeanie!

MARY. So that is why my hero was so anxious to come to this house!

WILLIE. Madam——

JEANIE. Madam, I canna' let him gang awa' again wi'oot me.

WILLIE. Ye disgrace me, Jeanie.

MARY. Silly lad! But truly the thought of your happiness will lighten my burden. May the Saints have you in their care.

JEANIE. But, madam, wi'oot Willie, hoo can I be happy? When shall I see him again? Oh, let me come, too.

MARY. Where? [*She pauses.*] Child, I have told you—my journey is a long one. I will ask no one to share it.

WILLIE. Yer Majesty shall niver gang alone.

MARY. I command you—— [WILLIE *bows*.] He shall ride with me until we meet Lord Herries, and then I promise you I will send him back. [MISTRESS BURNS *half turns round to listen*.] Good-bye, Jeanie. Be happy—as youth should be, as I should have been had they let me. [*She gives JEANIE a ring off her finger.*] Take this ring, and wear it sometimes for my sake. Come, Willie—— No words nor deeds of mine would suffice to reward such

loyalty as yours, so take the blessing of a queen who can worthily repay her servants with nothing but her love. [To MISTRESS BURNS] Mistress, I have trespassed too long on your hospitality. May God reward you for your generous action to-night.

MISTRESS BURNS [*moving a step nearer the QUEEN*]. I didna' do it because ye are the Queen. Be very sure o' that—an' I'm no' afraid to tell ye that Scotland is well rid o' sic as ye—but—[*her voice changes*] ye did save my son's life—an' I am no' forgettin', though maybe it isna' ye that can understand a' that means.

MARY. Trust me, Mistress, he shall return. Indeed I do know what you have suffered. It is only queens who may not hope to be understood.

[*The QUEEN, JEANIE, and WILLIE go out L., leaving MISTRESS BURNS alone, looking straight in front of her.*]

CURTAIN

CHARLES II AT CHARMOUTH

By C. J. DRUCE

CHARACTERS

THE HOSTESS

HENRY HULL, *the ostler*

A MAID

HAMMET, *a blacksmith*

A GROOM

LORD WILMOT

JULIANA CONINGSBY

COLONEL WYNDHAM

THE PARSON

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CHARLES II AT CHARMOUTH¹

SCENE I

A room in the Queen's Arms Inn, Charmouth, Dorset. The morning of 23rd September, 1651. The HOSTESS is bustling round, directing the MAID and HENRY HULL.

HOSTESS. Look to the packmen in the lower room, girl. They call for ale and bacon. Be their horses ready?

HULL. Oh, ay, readier than their riders. A roisterous, brawling, babbling crew as ever I saw. Yet the times be bad for them that peddle silks and laces and such-like vanity.

HOSTESS. You are as pleased as any raven to croak bad times.

HULL [*rubbing his hands*]. Nay, the times are good. The malignants be scattered to the four winds since Worcester Fight, and Charles Stuart himself a runaway with a price on his head.

HOSTESS. Poor young man. I hope he escapes them.

HULL. There's not a hole in England where he'll be safe.

HOSTESS. Maybe he'll win over to France, then. I hope he may, good Parliament woman though I am.

HULL. He'll not win to France without a ship, nor a ship without coming to the sea. And there will be a watch kept for him at all the ports—save maybe the petty ones—like this.
[*He becomes thoughtful.*]

¹ Requests for permission to perform this play should be sent to Messrs George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 182 High Holborn, London, W.C.1.

HOSTESS. The young lady and gentleman in the parlour, be they up yet?

MAID. Ay, and breakfasted and dressed for departing.

HOSTESS. They be quiet enough, at least.

HULL. Too quiet, perchance.

HOSTESS. Nay, why should they not keep themselves private, if it pleases them? A goodly young couple, in truth. If you ask me, they be making a runaway match of it. I taxed their groom with it, and he could scarce deny it. [*The MAID laughs.*] How now, Madam Pert, what hast got to say to that?

MAID. Only that they be the oddest pair of lovers my eyes have ever seen.

HOSTESS. How?

MAID. 'Tis the nature of sweethearts to be most fond when they be alone. But these keep their lovingness for company, from what I can spy.

HOSTESS. Keep your eyes and your tongue on your business, baggage. I'll have no keyhole-spying on guests in my house. [*Exit the MAID.*]

HULL. On my word, she's right; there's something mighty strange about yon pair. I warrant there's no more love between them than between you and me.

HOSTESS. Faith, there couldn't well be less. I rue the day I took you into my service—a meddlesome, sour-faced knave, evermore prying into other folks' concerns.

HULL. Some folks' concerns be the business of every honest man these days—and maybe the profit, too.

HOSTESS. That head of yours is as full of maggots as a cheese.

HULL. Why do their horses stand ready all night—and themselves, too, for aught I know? Why must nobody lay hand on them but their own groom? And here he comes.

[*The GROOM, a tall, dark young man, comes in from the yard.*]

GROOM. Good morning to you, mistress.

HOSTESS. And to you, Master Groom. You're about your business early. *[She goes out.]*

HULL. You're for an early start, it seems. Where might you be bound for?

GROOM. Faith, I wish I could tell you.

HULL. Belike you could if you wished.

GROOM *[confidentially]*. Harkee, friend, you should know what 'tis to serve a woman. My young mistress is full of whims and knows not her own mind from one minute to the next.

HULL *[sighing]*. Ay, that about serving a woman is true at least; I know it to my cost. You rode far yesterday?

GROOM. Far enough for me. What 'tis to be servant to a lovesick miss with no thought for any soul in the world save herself and her gallant!

HULL. 'Twas truly a strange whim to come to Charmouth. *[Looking hard at him]* Unless perchance they mean to cross the sea.

GROOM *[repressing a start]*. Nay, if they do, we part company. I was bred to horses; I have no mind for riding the waves.

HULL. I wonder you lay not at Lyme. The inns are better there.

GROOM. We purposed so, but the town is over-full with folks come for the fair.

HULL. To say naught of Captain Massey and his red-coats.

GROOM. Ay, no doubt they help the town's trade. But prithee, friend, is there a smith here? I find my master's horse has cast a shoe.

HULL. Yes, but Hammet is surly and slow in serving strangers. I'll e'en take him for you.

GROOM. Kindly offered, but you have your own gear——

HULL. Nought that'll spoil with keeping, and I love to do a friendly office for a civil, honest youth like you. I'll

not keep 'ee waiting long, and then we'll have a trifle more talk.

[He goes out. The GROOM looks after him uneasily and then knocks at the parlour-door. JULIANA and WILMOT come to the door.]

GROOM. Still no news?

WILMOT. Still none. I fear the scheme has miscarried.

GROOM. I climbed the hill here but now, but there was no sign of our friends on the road nor of any vessel on the sea.

WILMOT. It is not wise of your Maj——

JULIANA. Soft! Remember our rule! Not even when we're alone.

WILMOT. Long ere now you should have been aboard, with miles of sea between you and these white cliffs.

JULIANA. I hope no harm has befallen my uncle. We have waited all night in readiness to depart. I fear the folk here may suspect.

GROOM. There is a plaguy, curious knave of an ostler, too kind for my taste. I like not the friendliness of unfriendly persons. At present he has betaken himself to the blacksmith's with your horse, my lord.

WILMOT. Was it not dangerous to trust him?

GROOM. Yes, but more dangerous not to trust him—in appearance.

WILMOT. Would that appearances would permit you to remain in here with us out of the reach of prying eyes! *[Raising his voice as the HOSTESS comes in]* The horse lame, rascal? You are a lazy, careless villain not to have taken note before.

GROOM. I cry you mercy, sir, I——

JULIANA. Make no excuses. You care for nothing but eating and drinking and sleeping. I wish I were rid of you.

WILMOT. Do not trouble yourself, dear heart. I shall have your company the longer.

JULIANA. Nay, now you remind me of that, my dear, I can almost forgive his negligence.

[They withdraw very lovingly and close the door.]

HOSTESS. You seem to have displeased your gentlefolk, Master Groom.

GROOM *[grumbling]*. 'Tis always the way with gentlefolk. A man does his best——

HOSTESS. Truly, their anger was unjust—and mighty sudden, too!

GROOM. Maybe, though, 'tis the fault of being in love.

HOSTESS. Yes, they're as fond as a pair of turtle-doves. My heart goes out to them.

GROOM. You have a tender heart, Hostess.

HOSTESS. Faith, 'tis much too soft. 'Tis too prone to pity all kinds of runaways, and Lord knows there be plenty of them since Worcester Fight! They say the King fled southward.

GROOM *[severely]*. I take it you mean the man Charles Stuart.

HOSTESS. Why, yes, my tongue will keep its old trick, though my heart is strong for the Parliament, like all about here. Yet I wish the poor young man himself no harm, for I never heard any harm of him.

GROOM. And I never heard any good.

HOSTESS. I'd like to set eyes on him once.

GROOM. Most like you'd be disappointed. Kings and princes are made like other men. I think myself as good a man as he any day.

HOSTESS. I wonder what he's like?

GROOM *[carelessly]*. A stoutish, fair fellow, they say.

HOSTESS *[looking hard at him]*. Then my report lied, though it was our Parson himself that told me. He said a tall, lanky lad and as black as a gipsy.

GROOM *[starting slightly and then laughing very heartily]*. You make a mock of me, mistress, for you might be drawing my own picture. I am not much like a king, Heaven knows!

HOSTESS [*laughing*]. 'Tis no flattery to him, surely.

GROOM [*sulkily*]. My face is my own, Hostess, though little else is, and I doubt if that King of yours can show a better.

HOSTESS. If he comes here, I'll be able to judge the truth of that.

GROOM [*with meaning*]. 'Twould be a lucky day for you if he did. There's a price on his head.

HOSTESS. True, and I'm poor enough. So I hope he never comes, for I might show myself a fool after all!

GROOM. I would not call you a fool, fair Hostess.

HOSTESS. Nay, I am, for I am wasting the morning in idle talk. I'll not keep you from your business any longer, Master Groom, for I see it weighs on your mind.

[*They part, the GROOM looking after her doubtfully.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II

HAMMET's smithy, a few minutes later.

HULL. A good horse, blacksmith.

HAMMET. Ay.

HULL. Hast seen him before?

HAMMET. No.

HULL. Think you he belongs hereabouts?

HAMMET. No.

HULL. How canst tell?

HAMMET [*pointing to other three shoes*]. These shoes.

HULL. Yes, the make is strangely different from yours. Where was he shod last, think you?

HAMMET. Up in some northern parts.

HULL [*getting excited*]. Northern parts?

HAMMET. I'll take my oath these shoes were made and set in the north.

HULL. How far north? As far as Bristol?

HAMMET. Ay, and farther.

HULL. Or as Worcester?

HAMMET. Belike. Or farther.

HULL [*to himself*]. Worcester! Then my mind's misgivings were not for naught. A malignant lord, without a doubt, maybe even. . . . And no one knows but I. Yet I might be wrong, and then I should be called a fool and worse. The Parson! He should know. I'll e'en go and lay it before him. [*He hurries out.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE III

The same as Scene I, a few minutes later.

HOSTESS [*passing through the room with MAID*]. Where is that busy, lazy villain, Henry Hull? Not back yet?

MAID. Not yet.

[*They go out. WILMOT and JULIANA come to the parlour-door.*]

WILMOT. Be calm. 'Tis the only thing we can do.

JULIANA. I know. But this waiting in idleness is driving me mad. There is danger here; I can scent it in the air.

GROOM [*entering*]. You are always right, Mistress Juliana. I could almost wish myself back in the branches of that oak at Boscobel. But have you seen or heard anything particular?

JULIANA. Nothing. Only I like not the way our hostess smiles at us. I doubt she suspects.

GROOM. To say truth, so do I. But I'm more uneasy about my good friend the ostler. I long to see him back, and my lord's horse with him.

WILMOT. And still no word from Wyndham. That is what troubles me above all. [*A voice outside.*]

JULIANA. My uncle's voice! Now we shall know.
[COLONEL WYNDHAM *comes in.*] What news, Uncle?

WYNDHAM [*in a low, hurried tone*]. Almost the worst—none at all. We waited all night on the shore, but no sight or sound of our man. Either the skipper's heart has failed him, or he has been prevented. In either case, 'tis not safe to stay here longer.

JULIANA. I am sure it's not.

WYNDHAM. Peters is gone to Lyme to glean what he can.

GROOM. But how will he find us again?

WYNDHAM. He will come to the George Inn at Bridport. Your Maj—George Groom, I should say—I fear we shall have to give up the attempt for the present and return to my house at Trent. You can lie hidden there.

GROOM. Fortune is set against us. Still, they say she is a woman, so she may change her mind. My good friends, I grieve for all the care I lay upon you.

WYNDHAM. Speak not of that. We'll set out for Bridport at once, my niece riding pillion behind you as before.

WILMOT. I must wait till my horse is ready. I will follow with all possible dispatch.

WYNDHAM. 'Twill not be well to tarry long even at Bridport. If Peters brings no good news soon, we will take the Dorchester road and make for Trent——

[*He stops short, seeing the HOSTESS has entered.*]

WILMOT [*loudly*]. We will talk of that later, sir. My betrothed will choose to go where I go; will you not, dear heart? Hostess, the reckoning. [*To the GROOM*] Sirrah, attend to the gear.

[WYNDHAM and JULIANA go out WILMOT settles with the HOSTESS and follows. The GROOM fetches the baggage from the parlour.]

HOSTESS. You make a hasty start at last!

GROOM [*sulkily*]. And I wish I knew where we shall end. In London, maybe.

HOSTESS [*lowering her voice*]. Harkee, friend. If you take the Dorchester road from Bridport, there is a lane—Lee Lane, we call it—just beyond the town. It is narrow and almost hidden, and those who ride in haste—either flying or pursuing—might well miss it. There is a saying, “The longest way round is the shortest way home.”

GROOM. You have wise sayings round here, mistress, and kind ones, too. I shall remember the Queen’s Arms and its fair hostess.

[*Kisses her. The MAID passes through the room.*

HOSTESS. You are familiar for a groom. Yet good luck go with your young master and mistress—and with you. [*He goes out, and she looks after him thoughtfully.*] I wonder.

[*Excited voices outside. The MAID rushes in.*

MAID. Oh, mistress, here is Master Wesley, the Parson, and he says—he says——

[*The PARSON, an officious person, comes in, followed by HULL.*

PARSON. Why, how now, Margaret! You are a maid of honour now!

HOSTESS. What do you mean?

PARSON. Why, Charles Stuart lay the last night at your house and kissed you at his departure, so that now you can’t but be a maid of honour.

HOSTESS [*to herself*]. Then it was. [*Aloud*] If I thought it was the King I should think the better of my lips all the days of my life; and so, Mr Parson, get you out of my house, or else I’ll get those that shall kick you out!

PARSON. Have a care——

HOSTESS. Have you a care! Wasting an honest woman’s time with such stuff! And get you with him, Henry Hull, and never show your face here again.

[*She drives them out.*

MAID [*at window*]. The Parson is getting astride of a horse, and Hull, too. To Lyme, I’ll warrant, to Captain Massey and the Parliament men.

HOSTESS. Let them. The hares have a fair start. [*To herself*] Inland to the sea, and France, 'tis truly a long way round; but who knows but that some day it may lead home again?

CURTAIN

WHO COMES O'ER THE SEA?

An Echo of '45

By KENNETH MURRAY

CHARACTERS

JOHN GOODMARSH, *landlord of The Jolly Roger*

JACK, *his young son*

PARSON DAVIS

PETER DAVIS, *his nephew*

JACK STANWAY

HIS COMPANION, *newly arrived from France*

CAPTAIN STORM, *of the Free Rover.*

NAVAL CAPTAIN

SILAS

JEM

BILL

BEN

JERRY

TOBIAS

BART

} *smugglers*

JONAS

DANIEL

} *sailors on the King's ship*

FOUR SAILORS

SMUGGLERS *ad lib.*

The action takes place in the year 1751, six years after the failure of the 'Forty-five Rebellion.

¹ (PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD—"BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE")

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Who comes o'er the Sea? was originally written for presentation at the Christmas 'breaking-up' entertainment at a preparatory school, in response to a request—or rather, demand—by clamorous fourteen-year-olds for a costume play which should (i) have no feminine parts, (ii) contain a good deal of incident, and (iii) provide speaking-parts for as many boys as possible—the more the merrier.

The play was written hurriedly and against time, and since its production the author, although fully conscious of its imperfections, has had neither time nor opportunity to revise it. It is here presented as it was first written, in the hope that it may help other schools in an answer to the perplexing—yet piquant—question that presents itself each year: "Now, what play shall we do this Christmas?"

The scene between Captain Storm and the smugglers in *The Jolly Roger* at the beginning of Scene II was included in compliance with the third of the conditions mentioned above—although its insertion might possibly be defended on other grounds. This part of Scene II (*i.e.*, up to the entrance of the Prince and his companions) could, however, easily be omitted, if the play is considered too long.

If exception is taken to the presence of a Welsh parson in a Sussex village, the author would reply that the case of Sir Hugh Evans provides some warrant. But, indeed, it is to Smollett that he is most indebted—that brave and redoubtable Scotsman, himself not indifferent to the Jacobite cause nor averse to borrowing from his predecessors.

WHO COMES O'ER THE SEA?¹

SCENE I

Bar-parlour of the inn in the fishing-village of Darlton. A door at the back gives on to the cliff walk. On the wall above the door is painted, in a semicircle, the name of the inn, The Jolly Roger, the landlord's name, JOHN GOODMARSH and the date 1651 being printed below. A door on the L. leads to the LANDLORD's apartments. Three Smugglers, SILAS, JEM, and BEN, are seated on benches, and the parson, DAVIS, is asleep in his chair on the R. A fourth smuggler, BILL, has just come in by door at back.

JEM. Fog any clearer now, Bill?

BILL. Maybe, Jem—maybe not. [*Calls to door L.*] Tot o' rum, John.

JOHN. [*off L.*]. Ay, ay, sir.

BILL. Down by Dead Man's Cove it's as thick, you can't see a step ahead of you.

JEM. Risky work, Bill, landing a cargo.

BILL. Ay, that it be.

BEN. It wants a deal o' skill to bring a ship alongside in a fog like this. . . . Not that I'm saying a fog ain't mighty useful for running a cargo, and Cap'n Storm'll know how to make good use on it.

BILL. Ay. [*JOHN has entered with the tot of rum.*] Thank

¹ Performances of this play may be given in public without permission and without payment of any performing royalty provided the following notice is displayed on all announcements, programmes, etc.: "Who comes o'er the Sea?" is published by Messrs Samuel French, Ltd., 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

'ee, John. [*Drinks.*] It's raw cold down by the cave, too, and the steps is main slippery.

BEN. Fog can't last much longer, Bill.

BILL. No.

JOHN. It's not hoften these hearly Hoctober mists 'ang haround more'n the twenty-four hours. Hi remembers when me and Hadmiral Vernon set sail—now, that'd be [*scratches head*] eleven years ago now—it were in seventeen 'undred and forty—when we sailed for Porto Bello, markye—on the Spanish Main. Hadmiral Vernon—

SILAS [*interrupts* JOHN]. Old Grog sailed for Porto Bello in 'thirty-eight.

JOHN [*on his dignity*]. One thousand seven 'undred and forty, *Hi* said, Silas.

SILAS. An' I says, one thousand seven 'undred and thirty-eight.

JOHN. Ho! Well, Silas, per'aps you knows better'n me—who was, so to speak, a hintimate of the Hadmiral'ses.

SILAS. Well, all I know is, Old Grog—

JOHN [*interrupts*]. An' I thanks yer, Silas, not to call the Hadmiral Old Grog—a happellation reserved, so to speak, for 'is familiars.

SILAS. Familiar fiddlesticks! Seventeen 'undred and thirty-eight, I says. Ask Parson over there. Ahoy there, Parson!

[*The PARSON wakes with a start, blinks, and hastily ejaculates.*]

DAVIS. Amen!

SILAS. Now, lookee, Parson, didn't Old Grog sack Porto Bello in 'thirty-eight?

JOHN. Seventeen 'undred and forty.

SILAS. 'Thirty-eight.

JOHN. Seventeen 'undred an'— } (*ad lib.*)

SILAS. 'Thirty-eight.

DAVIS. Silence, look you—a conclusion to your tisorderly

prabblings and prawlings. Now, Silas, what is the causes of your tissensions?

SILAS. Well, now, Parson, it's like this. Old Grog sacked Porto Bello in seventeen thirty-eight, didn't he?

DAVIS [*nods head in negative*]. Inteet, no, inteet.

JOHN. Has Hi told yer, Silas.

DAVIS. Oh, no, it was in seventeen hundred and—thirty-nine.

JOHN [*as SILAS gloats*]. Ho! [*Stalks away.*]

DAVIS. The Admiral was a falorous man and a prave, well skilled in the tevices and stratagems and artifices of naval warfares. I to tell you nefer was man who teserved well of his country, so tiscourteously ill-treated and apused.

JEM.	} (<i>together</i>) {	Ay, that's right, Parson.
BILL.		Ay, that's so.
BEN.		Ay.
SILAS.		Ay, ay.

JEM. An' all the fault of this dratted ministry.

BEN. Well, what d'ye expect of a Government that won't even let a man carry on a little smuggling peaceful-like, eh?

BILL. Free-trading ain't what it used to be. Why, in the old days, you only 'ad to drop an 'int, and the preventive men—for a consideration, markye—the preventive men would be miles away down along the coast. Running a cargo in them days was as easy as drinking up your grog. But now, bust my buttons, what does the present ministry do, huh? Doubles the number of preventive men, and [*indignantly*] makes them do their job! [*Snorts.*] Set of maggits the present Government is—maggits; an' I've seen better'n they in a ship's biscuit.

DAVIS. Ay, inteet, a peggarly, rascally crew—as Suetonius observes—although, look you, he erred in his genders—*perfida grex venalium*.

BILL [*stares, then nods his head wisely*]. Ooh, ay, you're

right, Parson. Drat my bones, if you ain't 'it the nail right bang on the 'ead. Well, mates, 'ere's a toast. [*Rises.*] Down with the ministry, and hup with the free-traders. [*Chorus of "Ay, ay," "Down with the Government," "Long live free-traders," etc. They drink.*] Hang me, if smuggling it don't make grog taste all the better.

DAVIS. Ay [*smacking his lips*] inteet.

JOHN. There's one thing, Parson, I never could fathom. You—being of the Church, so to speak—'elping to smuggle a cargo. It don't seem—well, you see my meaning, Parson, so to speak?

DAVIS. Now, look you—to fiolate and set at tefiance the laws of a sovereign whose just titles were peyond questioning and tisputation were assuredly wicked and sinful and iniquitous. Put, inteet to goodness, my conscience tirects me that I owe no opediencies and opligations to a usurper, look you—nor to a plackguardly administration that opposes py force of arms the rightful sovereign, Prince Charles Edward. . . . I to give you a toast now: "The King—o'er the water."

[*All, rising, "Ay, ay," "The King over the water," "Bonnie Prince Charlie," etc. They drink.*]

BEN. Hang me, if it seems six year' sin' Bonnie Prince Charlie marched down from Scotland.

JOHN. Ooh, ay. 'E ought to 'a' marched straight on Lonnun in 'forty-five. The Whigs couldn't 'a' stopped 'im. The whole country would 'a' welcomed 'im. To turn back, markye, were a thunnering great mistake.

JEM [*oracularly*]. It were more'n that, John. It were a—herror.

JOHN. Ooh, ay.

DAVIS. Landlord, what was that song your son Jackie was singing the other day?—A Jacobite air. A plaintive melody, full of a gentle melancholy.

JOHN. Dunno, Parson. I'll call 'im. [*Calls.*] Jackie, my son.

JACK [*off L.*]. Coming, Father.

JOHN. 'E's always singing—like a young lark, so to speak. But I remembers now, the last day or two 'e 'as 'ad some such toon. [*Enter JACKIE, aged about twelve.*]

JACK. Yes, Dad?

JOHN. What's that toon, Jackie, you've been singing lately? Something about Bonnie Prince Charlie?

JACK. Oh, I know, Dad. It's called: *Will ye no' come back again?*

DAVIS. Ay, that is the title. I peseech you, sing me one of the verses. Now, look you, is it in three-four or quadruple measure?

JACK [*scratching head*]. I don't know what time it's in, sir.

DAVIS. Pless my soul, it is a fery important question. Inteeet to goodness, how can you carry your crotchets and your quavers and your minims, if you do not know the measure whatefer? Put no matter, I pray you, pegin.

[*JACK sings three verses and the chorus of the song, and SMUGGLERS and PARSON join in the chorus:*

Will ye no' come back again?
Will ye no' come back again?
Better loved ye canna' be—
Will ye no' come back again?

Fery good. Excellently well sung. Now, Jackie, here is a penny for you. And should occasions and causes demand it, may you serve Prince Charles Edward—your rightful king and sovereign, look you—as well with your sword as with your voice. [*Pats his head.*] Go now.

[*Exit JACK. A distant faint boom is heard. BILL starts forward.*]

BILL. What was that?

JEM. What?

BILL. Didn't you hear it?

JEM. No, I didn't 'ear nothing.

BILL. Didn't you, Ben?

BEN. No.

BILL. Didn't anyone 'ear anything? [*All nod or reply "No," etc.*] Strange, I could 'a' sworn I 'eard a gun firing.

[*Door at back opens. TOBIAS and JERRY enter.*]

JEM. 'Ullo, Jerry. 'Ullo, Tobias.

JERRY. 'Ow do, mates.

TOBIAS. 'Ullo.

SILAS. Fog any thinner, Jerry?

JERRY. Ay, it's lifting quite fast now. Bit of a wind blowing up from the sou'-west. Quite clear in an hour, it'll be. [*Calls.*] Rum, John.

JOHN. Ay, ay, sir.

[*He brings it during the following speeches.*]

BEN. The *Free Rover* can't be far off the coast now.

TOBIAS. No, Cap'n Storm ought to be dropping anchor outside the cove any moment.

JERRY. An' once that's done, it's up, my hearties, and put the cargo ashore in a jiffy.

BEN. What's the Captain's orders for the stowing on it?

JERRY. Orders is the same as last time.

SILAS. Let's hope Cap'n Storm makes a better job of it this time. Last time two boatloads were put ashore, when down swoops the preventive men. An' what 'appened to the rest of the cargo, only Cap'n Storm knows.

[*BART enters hurriedly by door at back. Cries of "Hullo," "Hullo, Bart," etc.*]

BART [*at door*]. The *Free Rover* 'as hove to, mates—anchoring outside the cove. Boats coming ashore now. Orders is: all hands down to Dead Man's Cove. [*He is out of breath after running. SMUGGLERS move over to door at back. "Ay, ay, Bart," "Coming, Bart," "Ready," etc. Exeunt SMUGGLERS. BART turns to JOHN.*] Tot o' rum, John. An' sharp's the word. [*Rubbing his hands.*]

JOHN. Ay, ay, Bart.

BART. Cold work down by the cove, Parson.

DAVIS. Ay. Is the fog, look you now, lifted?

BART. Ay, there's a stiff breeze sprung up. [JOHN *brings rum.*] Thank'ee, John. Here's to free-trading. ["Ay, ay," *from* DAVIS *and* JOHN.] Cap'n Storm must 'a' hove to in the fog, not knowing 'is bearings, an' immediately it were clear 'e 'oisted the signal. The *Free Rover's* standing two cable-lengths off shore—under the lee of Furze-down Bill.

JOHN. Then the boats ought to be landing any minute now, Bart?

BART [*finishes his drink*]. Ay. Well, I must get down to the beach again. So long.

JOHN. So long.

[*Exit* BART. JOHN *starts collecting mugs.*]

DAVIS. You will shortly, John, have your stocks replenished?

JOHN. Surely, Parson. The Jolly Roger always did show a good store of spirits. "Keep your spirits hup, John," my old father used to say to me. "Keep your spirits hup, an' [*chuckles*] leave others to put 'em down." An' no better man, mark'ee, ever sold grog this side of 'eaven—so to speak.

DAVIS. Inteet, a man—of spirit!

JOHN. Ay, that's so, Parson. A true Jacobite 'e were—fought for the Stuarts in the rebellion of 'fifteen. And 'ad 'e been living in 'forty-five, 'ang me, but 'e'd 'a' took arms for Bonnie Prince Charlie, as sure as my name's John Goodmarsh.

DAVIS. Your ancestors, look you now, have always been true and loyal supporters of the House of Stuart?

JOHN. Ay, my father, an' gran'father, an' my great-gran'father afore 'im. You see that date over the door, Parson?

[*Points.*]

DAVIS [*reads*]. Ay, sixteen fifty-one.

JOHN. Ay—one 'undred years ago. That date were put there, Parson, to mark a hevent that linked, so to speak, the fortunes of the House of Stuart with those of the House of Goodmarsh—if you see my meaning, Parson.

DAVIS. What event, John, was that now?

JOHN. Well, I ain't much skilled in 'istory, Parson [*scratching head*—and you, being eddicated, so to speak, can likely put me right on the detailses. But I'll tell 'ee the story, Parson, as my father told me. Now what were the name of that king who were be'eaded? Charles, weren't it?

DAVIS. Ay, Charles the First. He was arraigned and condemned and executed py the orders of Oliver Cromwell—a pold man, look you, and a man of plood—inteet, yes. When I to think of that iniquitous usurper and regicide, my plood purns. Put I pray you, proceed.

JOHN. Well, after King Charles 'ad been be'eaded, 'is son made a bid to regain 'is father's throne. [*Nods his head.*] But it were, so to speak, foredoomed to fail.

DAVIS. Ay, the young Prince Charles was tefeated at the Pattle of Worcester, in that fery year—sixteen hundred and fifty-one. And afterwards, teserted and forsaken py his friends, he was left to gain his safety in his own ways. He escaped, look you, on one occasion, py hiding in the pranches of an oak-tree, without peing seen py the Parliamentary rapscallions whatefer. Ay, I have read it in the historians.

JOHN. Ay, that's so, Parson. Well, after some weeks, being 'idden 'ere, an' biding 'is time there, an' being sought for everywhere, as you might say, the Prince made 'is way down 'ere to the Channel. An' then, one evening in November—just as it were getting dusk-like, and my great-gran'father were thinking to light 'is lamps, a man comes rushing in—into this very room, Parson.

DAVIS. The Prince?

JOHN. Ay, the Prince. 'E were being 'unted by the Parliament men. Close on 'is 'eels they were. My great-gran'father scarce 'ad time to 'ide 'im, when in dashes the Roundheads. They searched 'ere and there, and turned the whole place inside hout, so to speak. An' when they couldn't find 'im, didn't they stamp about an' bang their muskits! Cursed an' swore 'orrible, they did. [*Chuckles.*] But ne'er a bit did they find 'im, Parson.

DAVIS. Pless my soul! Now where did the Prince Charles hide?

JOHN [*hesitates, then*]. I'll show 'ee, Parson.

[He gets up and slides a groove in one of the panels in the back wall: this opens a secret panel in the back wall.]

DAVIS. Leeks and taffodils!

JOHN. It were through 'ere, Parson. This be a secret passage leading down to the foot of the cliff. The Prince 'id be'ind 'ere.

[DAVIS goes across and examines the panel, then turns back.]

DAVIS. Put this secret panel, look you, is not known to the generality?

JOHN. Eh, no, Parson. There's but few knows on't. For, mark'ee, Parson, oo' knows, thinks I, but that one day it might be main useful, if p'r'aps the preventive men should get too hinqusitive about the contraband?

DAVIS. Ay, that is so, inteet. How does it open, John?

JOHN. Sliding this groove 'ere, Parson. [*Shows.*]

DAVIS. Ay. And to close it?

JOHN. If you give it a pull, so [*he does so, and panel closes*], slips back into place it does of its own accord.

DAVIS. And so the Prince Charles eluded them?

JOHN. Surely, an' that very night 'e got ship safely hacross to France.

DAVIS. It is a fery interesting story, John. Pless my soul, to think it is a hundred years ago since all that has

happened, and that now, look you, the heirs and tescendants of that self-same Prince Charles who sheltered here should themselves pe exiles in a foreign land, tispossessed of their true inheritances.

JOHN. Ay.

DAVIS [*looking at his watch*]. Pless my soul, it is turned half-past seven. I must get me back to the ficarage.

[*Looks at his mug.*]

JOHN. Just another drop o' grog, afore ye go, Parson—just to keep out the cold like? It sure be some step over yonner.

DAVIS. Inteet. Ay, a small one. [*Exit JOHN. Then returns with grog.*] Thank you, John.

JOHN. Naught like grog, Parson, to warm 'un in these hautumn hevenings. Now Hi remembers when me and Hadmiral Vernon were attacking Porto Bello—on the Spanish Main, mark'ee. The Hadmiral always saw to it that the men 'ad a double ration of rum at night. Sure, Parson, 'e were main thoughtful o'er the men.

DAVIS. Ay, the ministry were ungenerous and ungrateful and oblivious of his true services, to tismiss him, look you, and teprive him of his offices, inteet, each one of them.

JOHN. But what can ye expect, Parson, with a Whig Government in hoffice, and a furriner on the throne? Not that I'm haught agen them that chuses to 'old in with the 'Anoverian furriners. We all 'as our mouths to feed, so to speak. Now, Mr Peter, your nephew, Parson——

DAVIS. Ay, my nephew. Indeed, he is fery attached and peholden to the Whigs and the House of Hanover.

JOHN. I trust Mr Peter's keeping well, Parson?

DAVIS. Ay, I thank you, he is in goot health. Ooh, I have lately received a letter from him, look you. He tells me, that should the circumstances and the possibilities permit him, he will shortly fisit me.

[*Enter CAPTAIN STORM and PRINCE CHARLES by door at back ; the former is dressed in nautical attire, the latter as a person of quality. His identity, of course, is not known.*]

STORM [*at door*]. Ahoy there, John.

JOHN. Ahoy, Cap'n.

STORM. How do, Parson.

DAVIS. Good efening, Captain Storm. How do you?

STORM [*turns to the PRINCE, who has remained standing at door*]. Come right in, your honour, and it's welcome ye are to harbour and a safe anchorage. May I introduce to your honour Parson Davis?

PRINCE [*bowing*]. Your humble servant, sir.

DAVIS [*bowing*]. Yours to command, sir.

STORM. Parson Davis be vicar in these parts, your honour, and—saving your presence, Parson—no truer messmate or more skilled a navigator e'er unnertook the steerage of men's souls.

DAVIS. Awh, Captain Storm, look you, now, you assuredly to give me occasions to plush. [*Turns to the PRINCE.*] Ay, it is true, sir, I have the cure of souls in this parish.

STORM. Have ye any landlubbers aboard, John, in your bunks?

JOHN. No, Cap'n.

STORM. Then, belikes, ye've a berth will accommodate this gentleman?

JOHN. Surely. [*Turns to the PRINCE.*] A room shall be made ready at once, your honour.

PRINCE. Thank you. And what about a meal, landlord? I' faith, this sea-air gives a man an appetite—and what with the excitements of the crossing, I'm nigh famished.

JOHN. Give me honly 'alf a hour, your honour, an' I'll set afore 'ee the best meal ye've ever tasted, so to speak, this side of Jordan.

PRINCE. Thank you, landlord. If your food is as satisfying as my appetite is hearty, we'll dine off ambrosia itself.

JOHN [*nodding head in negative*]. Sorry, no, your honour, we ain't got none of that this week. But we'll find some'ut for your honour just as good.

[*Exit JOHN, shouting: "Betsy, Jane, stir yourselves, ye wenches. Bustle yourselves. There's quality to dinner."*]

DAVIS. You had, sir, I hope, a smooth crossing from France?

PRINCE. *Smooth* enough, thank you, sir, but, egad, not altogether without excitement!

DAVIS. The fog, look you, did cause you some inconveniences and perturbations?

PRINCE. Why, no, sir. Rather we were indebted to the fog, eh, Captain?

STORM. Ay, ay, your honour. You see, Parson, we weighed anchor from France the day afore yesterday, with fair weather an' wind astern. But rot my halyards, we had borne only a few leagues, when the wind drops and down comes this Channel fog. When it lifted awhile in mid-channel, why, if there weren't a King's ship not a league off, hard upon our starboard beam. She fetched a shot or two over our bows, d'ye see, an' it's sent to the bottom we'd 'a been, if the fog 'adn't mercifully come down again.

PRINCE. I' faith, it was the fog saved us, Captain.

STORM. That's so, your honour. When the fog lifted again, Parson, we discovered that she an' we 'ad parted company, an' that we were close in shore. Od's my bones, we only 'ad to round Furzedown Bill, d'ye see, 'oist the signal, an' send the boats ashore.

DAVIS. Put, look you, if you say that the fog saved you, py tescending when you found yourselves at close quarters with the King's ship, intet to goodness, was

it not also the original causes of those fery same mischances?

STORM. Mebbe, Parson. But I've a notion, d'ye see, that the King's ship knew how the land lay, and that, when the fog came down, she was fast over'auling us.

PRINCE [*quickly and with anxiety in his voice*]. You think she followed us from France, Captain?

STORM [*reassuringly*]. Oh, but don't concern yourself, your honour. She's sheered off, d'ye see, an' left us in safe riding. So avast with cares, your honour!

PRINCE. Ay, Captain. But for the moment I felt—Still, it's over now, od's bodikins, and, as you say, we're in safe riding.

STORM. Ay, an' safely moored—for the time being.

PRINCE [*slowly*]. For the time being. You're right. [*Then brightens.*] But it's the first step taken, Captain—the first stage completed, thanks to you, my friend. And whatever the future may hold [*takes his hand*] pray Heaven I find friends as true as you. And now, don't let me keep you, if you want to get down to the shore. You've got that cargo to land, Captain.

STORM. Ay, I've not forgotten it, your honour. I must tack about an' see to the stowing on it. I'll see your honour later.

PRINCE. Very good, Captain.

[*Exit STORM by door at back. The PRINCE turns to the PARSON.*]

PRINCE. A skilful mariner, sir.

DAVIS. Ay, he lives for the sea only. It is his natural element.

PRINCE [*tentatively*]. And a Jacobite, too, sir, as he tells me.

DAVIS. Ay, he is one of that party.

PRINCE. And you, sir?

DAVIS [*pauses, then*]. Now, look you, sir, as you are lately come from France, you cannot be expected to know

the conditions and the circumstances of the times whatever. Put these are times, pless me, which are dangerous for true men to teclare themselves. Inteet, sir, I am of the honest party, nor to I care who knows it, and they who say contrariwise are liars and cheats and teceivers, and I do snap my fingers at them.

[*Does so. Enter JACK STANWAY by door at back. He is a young man of about thirty.*]

STANWAY [*at door*]. They're bringing the things up now—— [*He is interrupted by DAVIS.*]

DAVIS. Jack Stanway, or I am no Welshman. Jack Stanway, you are welcome. How to you?

STANWAY. Why, Parson Davis. [*They shake hands.*] How are you, Parson?

DAVIS. Fery well, I thank you. It is many years since I have seen you, Jack Stanway.

STANWAY. Ay, six years, Parson.

DAVIS. Oh, six years. That is so, inteet. You went to the north to the aid of the Prince Charles in 'forty-five.

STANWAY. Ay.

DAVIS. And since then, I am told, you have accompanied the Prince aproad?

STANWAY. Ay, exiles for six long years, Parson. But there's an end even to the longest exile, and the Prince will come into his own again.

DAVIS. Inteet, I to hope so. [*Turns to PRINCE.*] And you, sir, have peen an exile, too?

PRINCE, Ay.

DAVIS. You will pardon me, sir, put Captain Storm—who, look you, although he is an excellent seaman, yet he is not practised in the ceremonies and pehaviours of society—Captain Storm neglected to tell me your name.

PRINCE. My name, sir? [*Pauses, and then simply and with dignity.*] Charles Edward Stuart, rightful heir to this kingdom, and come to claim the throne of my ancestors.

DAVIS. Ponnie Prince Charlie! *[Throws himself on his knee and takes the PRINCE's hand.]* Your Royal Highness!

CURTAIN

SCENE II

The scene is the same as Scene I, but it is now evening. An oil-lamp hangs down from the ceiling, and this (apparently) gives the only illumination in the bar-parlour. As the curtain goes up, the SMUGGLERS are seen seated in the bar, busy in loud argument. It is left to the producer to settle how many there are, but the following have speaking parts: JEM, BILL, BEN, SILAS, BART, TOBIAS, and JERRY. The voice of SILAS disengages itself from the general hubbub.

SILAS. Well, then, mates, we're agreed, are we, that such things ain't to be tolerated?

[Chorus of "Ay, ay," "That's so, Silas," etc.]

JEM. Ay, ay, Silas. If a man can't rely on a little honest smugglerling, 'ang me, what is a man to do?

BILL. 'Ear, 'ear, Jem.

JEM. And smugglerling to be advantageous must be profitable. That's a reasonable praposition, ain't it, mates? *[Chorus of approval.]* Well, then, that being so, I ax 'ee, can this 'ere free-trading be called prafitable, when the Cap'n lands a cargo like this one?

BILL. Why, no, Jem. Ten boatloads of cargo won't go nowhere no'ow.

BEN. It ain't even equal to 'alf o' the cargoes the Cap'n used to land.

SILAS. An' what's more, this ain't the fust time.

BART. That's so, Silas. 'Ow much did any o' we see o' that cargo the time afore?

JEM. None at all, Bart—none on it.

TOBIAS. The preventives snaffled arl that was put ashore.

JERRY. An' Cap'n Storm carried off the rest in the *Free Rover*.

BEN. Huh! An' me an' you didn't get naught on it. [*Chorus of "Ay, ay," "'Ear, 'ear," "That's so," etc.*] Now, I ax 'ee, mates, is it fair?

[*Chorus of "No," "No, Ben," etc.*]

BART. Then what are we going to do about it?

BILL. Do? Drat my bones, tell Cap'n Storm we wants a bigger cargo an' a squarer deal.

[*Chorus of "'Ear, 'ear," "That's right, Bill."*]

JEM. I'm not saying, Bill, as 'ow you're not right—only—there's one thing we've forgotten.

BILL. An' what's that, Jem?

JEM. Oo's going to tell the Cap'n, huh? [*Looks round.*]

BART. Well, what about you, Jem? You knows 'ow to bring out them long words main praper like Parson do.

JEM. Me? No fear, I ain't going to brave the storm. What about you, Bart?

BART. Me? Not likely.

JEM. You, Ben?

BEN. Not in these trousers.

JEM. Then you, Bill?

BILL. No, I ain't no 'and at speechifying.

JEM. Well, it were your idea, Bill.

[*Chorus, "Ay, ay," "That's so."*]

BILL. Now, look 'ere, it ain't no use, your trying to put this on to me. Cap'n Storm, when 'is temper's up, 'e ain't no ord'nary storm—'e's a blooming 'urricane.

JEM. Ho, well, Bill, if you're afraid of the Cap'n—o' course [*shrugs shoulders*] there ain't no more to be said.

BILL. 'Oo's afraid? Me? I like that! Why, bust my buttons, I'd show 'un 'oo's 'oo any day of the week.

BART. Ay, that's the spirit, Bill.

TOBIAS. That's right, Bill, show 'im what's what.

JERRY. Give it 'im 'ot and strong, Bill.

[Chorus of "Ays."

BILL. Now, look 'ere, I don't see why—

BEN. That's all right, Bill, we'll back 'ee up.

[Enter CAPTAIN STORM by door at back. At first he is unobserved.

JEM. Only—be firm with 'im, Bill. Firmness. That's so, ain't it, mates?

[Prolonged "Ays," "Firmness," etc., during which STORM stands waiting at the door. TOBIAS catches sight of him there, and warns the others.

TOBIAS. The Cap'n! [The hubbub stops.

STORM. Shiver my topsails, an' what might be the meaning on it? We get the cargo ashore, an' I leave ye to see to the dispatching it. An' what do I find? A crew of narsty, scurvy lubbers skulking below 'atches, when they ought to be going about their duties. [To BEN] Rot my halyards, why hev' ye sheered off, Ben 'Awkins?

BEN [in a pacifying tone]. We've got the cargo ashore, Cap'n.

STORM. Ye walrus-faced swab, I know that. But why ain't ye seeing to the sorting on it—ready to send it back yonner inland? Why, that cargo ought to be 'alf over the county afore morning!

BEN. Well, it's like this, Cap'n—'ere, Bill, you tell 'im.

SILAS. Ay, go on, Bill.

JEM. Firmness, Bill. [They push him forward.

BILL. Well, you see, Cap'n, the men ain't satisfied with the cargo ye've brought over from France.

STORM. An' what about the cargo, ye lubber?

BILL. Well, cap'n, it's main small.

TOBIAS. Only ten boatloads, Cap'n.

BART. An' the men are afeared, Cap'n, that the prafits 'll be small, too.

SILAS. If any at all.

STORM. An' who are ye, ye swabs, I should like to

know, to decide what cargo I land? [*To BILL*] Do I hold the tiller, ye son of a sea-cook?

BILL. Ay, Cap'n, but it's not only this time. The time afore, ye see—— [*Breaks off.*]

STORM. Out with it, man.

BILL. Well, the time afore, the preventives snaffled two boatloads——

BEN. An' *you* carried off the rest on it, Cap'n.

JERRY. An' only *you* knows where it were landed, Cap'n.

JEM. If belikes it were landed at all.

STORM. So that's the lay of the land, is it? Ye thinks arl's not above board? Well, it's a land lie, ye lubbers, an' I'll nail it down to the quarter-deck.

BEN [*truculently*]. Well, Cap'n, we ain't seen none of that cargo.

STORM. Of course, ye ain't.

SILAS. Then what have ye done with it, Cap'n?

STORM. Done? Look'ee, it's forty year, Silas Clegg, man an' boy, I've sailed the Channel, an' d'ye think it's now I'm agoing to be learned to set my own course?

BILL. Well, Cap'n, we means to 'ave our share o' that cargo.

STORM. Ye threaten me, do ye, ye porkus?

BART. You see, Cap'n, you got the 'ole o' that cargo time afore last.

STORM. Shiver my timbers, ye shan't run that rig on me.

BART. Oh, no, Cap'n, but——

STORM. So ye think, do ye, that I'm agoing to send my boats ashore ready for the preventives to take 'em? Rot my scuppers, give me men of sense.

SILAS. Well, then, Cap'n, what did 'appen to the cargo?

STORM [*imitates*]. What did 'appen? [*Pause.*] Why, ye swabs, landed long ago an' all safely stowed.

BART }
 SILAS } [together]. Where, Cap'n?
 JEM }

STORM. Ah, I thought that'd make 'ee pipe a different toon.

BILL. So ye *did* land it, Cap'n?

STORM. Ay, ye lubber. An' what did ye think I should do with the cargo? 'Eave it overboard for arl the little fishes to get drunk on it? Or likely for the mermaids to enjoy a little quiet smoke with the baccy that was there? Split my yard-arm, where did ye learn your navigation?

BEN. But where was it landed, Cap'n?

STORM. Why, some leagues down along the coast, beyond Darlstone Point, d'ye see.

BART. But what are the prafits from it, Cap'n?

["Ay, ay," "'Ear, 'ear," "That's what we want to know," etc.]

STORM. An' what concern is that o' yours, I should like to know?

BEN. Well, Cap'n, a man 'as to live.

SILAS. An' it's main little we shall get from the cargo we've just landed, Cap'n.

JEM. There ain't much prafit on a cargo like this 'un.

TOBIAS. An' that last 'un, Cap'n——

BART. Not a penny from it ha' we seen yet.

BILL. We wants our share now, Cap'n.

[These last four speeches are in quick succession, and are echoed by a chorus of "Ay, ay," "'Ear, 'ear," "That's right, Bill," etc. They crowd round him. Prolonged uproar.]

STORM. Get back, will 'ee? Shiver my topsails, I'll not stand it. What d'ye mean, Bill Dawson, coming athwart my weather bows in this manner? Who are ye to give your orders 'ere, ye son of a sea-calf?

BILL. Well, Cap'n, the prafits from these cargoes——

STORM [explosively]. Prafits! By thunder, can't ye

talk of aught else but prafits? Now, look'ee, Bill Dawson, 'ow long 'ave I 'ad the 'elm of the *Free Rover*?

BILL. Why, ten year, Cap'n.

STORM. Ay, an' 'ow many cargoes 'av' I put ashore during that ten year?

BILL [*scratching head*]. Dunno, Cap'n.

STORM. Nor I either. But I've landed more cargoes, mark'ee, Bill Dawson, the last ten year, than ye've sung 'ymns your whole life through. [*Then appeals to the whole of them.*] Now, look'ee, 'aven't I tacked about and fooled the preventives for ye time and again? [*"Ay, ay," "That's so, Cap'n," etc.*] Why, at times, I've run the cargo right under their very noses. That's so, ain't it? [*Shouts of "Ay."*] 'Asn't all been fair an' square afore? [*Shouts of "Ay."*] Then it's main ungen'rous, I calls it, for ye to think that I ain't running a straight course now—ungen'rous, and it 'urts my feelings, Bill Dawson. I may be a plain sailor-man, but ingratitood—I can't abide it. An' I tell 'ee, it's a rotten plank that ought to be 'ove down an' over'auled.

BEN. Well, Cap'n, we don't mean we're not grateful to 'ee——

BART. But the prafits, ye see, Cap'n——

STORM. Prafits! [*BART jumps. Then STORM continues in a reasonable tone to all.*] Now, look'ee, are ye going to make that cargo ready? Depend on't, ye'll get your prafits arl in good time—every man of ye who's rated upon the books—an' p'r'aps a little hextra in addition.

JEM. Well, Cap'n, if that's the case, there hain't no more to be said.

BEN. We'll be quite content, Cap'n.

BILL. Ay, Cap'n, if that's so.

STORM. Well, then, down to the cave with ye. [*"Ay, Ay, Cap'n," "We'll get down, Cap'n," etc. Exeunt SMUGGLERS.*] John! Tot o' rum, John!

JOHN [*off*]. Coming, Cap'n.

[*Brings it.*]

STORM. Thank'ee, John. [*Drinks heartily.*] Shiver my timbers, a crew of skulking, ungrateful, lubberly swabs—— Bring me my pipe, John, an' let me get the smell of 'em out of my nostrils. [*JOHN brings pipe.*] Thank'ee.

[*The PRINCE, STANWAY, and DAVIS enter by door L.*

STORM *is standing R.*

JOHN. Is there haught else your honour will be requiring?

PRINCE. No, thank you, landlord.

JOHN. Very good, your honour.

PRINCE. As you see, landlord, we have done full justice to the excellent meal you prepared for us. I' faith, it's good to sit down before a blazing English fire to an English meal again.

JOHN. Surely, your honour. I never did 'old with them French ragoos and such-like frippery-frapperies. Now Hi remembers when me an' Hadmiral Vernon were laying off Porto Bello—on the Spanish Main, mark'ee. One day the Hadmiral 'ad just pushed back 'is chair from the table, 'aving finished 'is lunch, an' was drinking up 'is sherry—the Hadmiral always 'ad 'is glass of sherry after——

PRINCE. Ah, landlord, a good idea of yours. Let's try some of your excellent sherry.

JOHN. Very good, your honour. As Hi was saying, the Hadmiral——

PRINCE. We shall want three glasses, landlord.

JOHN. Ay, your honour. The Hadmiral was drinking hup——

PRINCE [*to STORM*]. You'll join us in a glass, I hope, Captain?

STORM. Thank you, your honour.

PRINCE. Four glasses, landlord.

JOHN. Ay, your honour. 'E was just drinking hup 'is sherry, when 'e turns to me. "Goodmarsh," 'e sez——

PRINCE [*firmly*]. Landlord, we'll have the sherry in here.

JOHN. Ho! Very good, your honour.

[*Exit.*]

PRINCE. England again, Jack.

STANWAY. Ay, it's good to be back again, your highness.

DAVIS. There is some, your highness, who would wish that your highness, when you were in England pefore, had continued your marches to London.

PRINCE. I' faith, sir, had the reports we received been accurate—had we known the Bank to have paid out every penny of its reserve—that panic prevailed in the capital—that his Grace of Newcastle was ready to join our party—that on that Black Friday the Hanoverian usurper was preparing to flee to the Continent—had we known all this, I say, then we should not have turned back. . . . But rumour lied, and darker counsels prevailed, and the bloody sequel, sirs, is known to you all. . . . But there are still many, you say, sir [*to PARSON*] who drink the loyal toast?

DAVIS. Ay, the toast of the King of the Water is still honoured. And, look you, there is many hearts that would be glad, and many souls that would be joyful, if they did know that that king had returned to the land of his fathers.

STANWAY. And many swords, Parson, that would be drawn to fight for that King?

DAVIS. Inteed, I do think so, for there is many families in these parts on whose courage and support your highness could depend, should your highness make an appeal to arms.

[*JOHN enters with the sherry. They cease talking.*]

JOHN gives round the sherry.

PRINCE. Thank you, landlord.

[*Exit JOHN, after which DAVIS rises to give the toast.*]

DAVIS. Your highness.

[*They drink the toast.*]

PRINCE. Thank you, my friends. [*Turns to STORM*]
Captain, what is your opinion?

STORM. Well, your highness, it's not much I'm ashore,

being more used to the feel of the tiller, d'ye see, than of any land-fixture, and more accustomed to sound a channel than to sound the opinions of other folk. But shiver my timbers, there's few in these parts who wouldn't be glad to see your highness come into your own again.

PRINCE. Ay, Captain, of that I feel assured.

STORM. But whether *arl* those same will turn out in fighting trim, d'ye see, ready to grapple with the Hanoverians—why, your highness, that's clean outside my navigation and doesn't find itself on my charts.

PRINCE [*nodding*]. I see, Captain.

STANWAY. But there's some, Captain, you think, would take up arms for the true cause?

STORM. Ay, your honour, true there be. There's many a Tory family in these parts remembers 'forty-five.

STANWAY. Ay, and would strike a blow again, I'll be bound, for the same cause [*turning to the PRINCE*] if your highness declared yourself.

[*Enter PETER DAVIS by door at back. He is a presentable young man in the early twenties.*]

DAVIS [*seeing him*]. Oh, Peter.

[*Gets up and crosses to the door.*]

PETER. Hullo, Uncle. [*Shakes hands.*] How are you?

DAVIS. Fery well, I thank you. And how are you?

PETER. Very well, thank you, Uncle.

DAVIS. Pless my soul, I tid not know that you were coming to fisit me so shortly.

PETER. Well, I decided on the spur of the moment. Ned Strachey, you see—you remember Ned?

DAVIS. Ay, he was a poy of promise.

PETER. Ay, but it wants more than promise to get a post on board. His ship was put out of commission some months ago, and since then, like me, he's found himself out of a crib. When he told me he proposed coming down to Lewes on a visit to his people, I decided to make the journey with him. We travelled down together by

the stage-coach to-day. I left him at Lewes and walked on over here. They told me when I reached home that, likely as not, you were here. So, od's fish, here I am, and glad to see you again, Uncle.

DAVIS. And I am glad, too, Peter, that you should arrive at this conjuncture of times, for, look you——

STANWAY [*who has come across to them*]. Egad, Peter Davis. [*Recognizing him*] How are you? [*Shakes hands.*] Why, it's years since our courses have crossed.

PETER. Ay, and how's the world wagging with you, Stanway?

STANWAY. Well, thanks.

PETER. But what are ye doing here? The last I heard of you was that you had crossed to France—from necessity, i' faith.

STANWAY. And it's thence I've just returned on the *Free Rover*.

[DAVIS *has meanwhile approached and spoken to the PRINCE, who is seen to nod assent.*

DAVIS [*to PETER, taking him by the arm*]. Peter, there is surprises for you. Your highness, this is my nephew Peter. Peter, his Royal Highness Prince Charles Edward. [*PETER stands astonished. DAVIS makes signs to PETER to remember his manners.*] Pow, Peter. Pow.

PETER [*bowing*]. Your highness—I must—apologize for my ill manners—but—i' faith [*in a burst*] I thought your highness was in France.

PRINCE. A few hours ago, indeed, I *was* there. Jack Stanway and I have only just landed an hour or two ago. Captain Storm [*indicates him*] brought us over in the *Free Rover*.

PETER. How do, Captain?

STORM. How do, young sir?

PETER. And how's the *Free Rover*, Captain?

STORM. Still showing a deal o' canvas aloft, young sir, and a good store of cargo below. [*To the PRINCE*] Well,

your highness, with your leave, I'll put about ship, and get down to the cave.

PRINCE. All right, Captain. We'll see you in the morning.

STORM. Ay. Good night, your highness.

PRINCE. Good night, Captain.

STORM. Good night, your honours.

[*"Good night" from all. Exit STORM by door at back.*]

PRINCE. What, sir, is your profession?

PETER. My profession, your highness? Zounds, a poor one—or none at all. I've recently completed a five years' apprenticeship, your highness, to a surgeon. Last March, I presented myself for examination, at Surgeons' Hall, and, I'm glad to say, passed the tests satisfactorily.

DAVIS. Ay, your highness, he tid receive a second class.

PRINCE. Congratulations, sir.

PETER. Thank you, your highness. Well, I was optimistic enough on the strength of this qualification, to hope to obtain the post of surgeon's mate on board a warship. But, od's life, there's no opening for merit these days—unless there's interest or cash to support it.

PRINCE. You weren't able to get an appointment?

PETER. No. When I attended last March at the Naval Office, I found, egad, that first of all I was expected to make a present to the secretary. Having done that—from a purse none too full—I hoped my name would be put on the books immediately. At any rate, I was promised the first vacancy—only to find, od's my bones, that the same promise had been given to any number of others.

DAVIS. Inteet, for shame, it was a great tissimulation.

PETER. The secretary's gift was only the first fence, so to speak. Since then it's been nothing but a repetition of the same story. I was told I must seek the favour of my Lord So-and-so—that I must wait upon such and such a Commissioner. I' faith, at one time and another,

I've waited upon the whole plaguy Board of Commissioners in turn—always with the same result. Promises—promises the whole time.

PRINCE. And no fulfilment of them?

PETER. Lud, no, your highness. Those sharks at the Navy Office fall over one another in their hurry to accept a present and make fair-weather promises. But when the time comes to carry out those promises, 'sblood, it's always the same excuses: "There are no new ships being put into commission," or "She's already got her complement." And one's purse, egad, gets lean very quickly on that diet.

DAVIS. Ay, your highness. I am, look you, his guardian, and a country clergyman's stipend, inteet, is put small and peggary.

PETER. A man has to be a Whig before he can get an appointment nowadays.

PRINCE. Ah, and you are no Whig, sir?

PETER. Why, no, your highness.

DAVIS. Inteet, no. Although my conditions is poor, yet is my pirth and parentage as goot as any in Wales, and my family is the pest of Glamorganshire. It is, pless me, unpecoming to a Tavis to have to seek favours from the Whigs, look you, and receive such treatment from them in consequences.

STANWAY [*to PETER*]. But, od's fish, Davis, that's the only treatment you're likely to receive from them.

PETER. It seems so, egad!

STANWAY [*eagerly*]. Then why not, Davis, be of the Prince's party? What you can expect of the Whigs, you and all of us well know—nothing but empty promises and broken faith. And as long as there's a Hanoverian on the throne, so long it'll be the Whigs who are in power.

PETER [*attempting to interrupt*]. But——

STANWAY. His Royal Highness has returned from France to claim what is his by right. When he declares

himself, all those who know what Hanoverian promises are worth—who still remember the honest cause—whose loyalty, in spite of the times, still remains strong for the House of Stuart—all these will flock to join him. [*Pauses.*] Will you be one of them, Davis? [PETER *does not reply.*

PRINCE. You'll join our party, sir?

PETER [*pauses before replying: then, deliberately*]. Your highness, I was born in 1722—eight years after the Hanoverians came to the throne. I belong, you see, your highness, to that generation, who know no other rule than the Hanoverian. All my life I've seen the country in enjoyment of peace and orderly government—except for that time your highness raised the 'Forty-five. . . . There are many, your highness, who will always be bound to feel a great love for your house. Yet their love for their country is so much stronger, that they shrink from seeing it distracted by civil war.

PRINCE. I appreciate what you say, sir, nor am I foolish enough to think that a kingdom can be won without some amount of fighting. But, in truth, sir, in 'forty-five, we had marched from the Highlands to England, and reached Derby, with hardly a drop of blood being shed. When, at Derby, we decided to retreat, we were wrong to do so, for the reports we received were inaccurate. Had we marched on London, i' faith, I'm convinced it would have been ours without fighting. For the slaughter at Falkirk, the atrocities at Culloden Moor, and the bloody revenge the Duke of Cumberland took on hapless men—for these we were not responsible, however much we may deplore them. And the blood be on the head of them who are responsible.

DAVIS [*simply*]. Amen.

PETER. But from the very fact that your highness failed in your attempt—I say it without wishing to give your highness offence—but because of that your cause has been greatly discredited. And there are many, who

might have joined your highness in 'forty-five, who now would support the established government, rather than see their country torn by civil strife, with a throne for the prize.

STANWAY [*impatiently*]. But the Prince claims only his own.

PETER. Yes. That may or may not be so, but——

STANWAY [*angrily*]. What, sir? May be? [*His hand to sword*] Do you doubt that, sir?

PETER. No, but—you see, your highness, to the present generation, it's all ancient history—it's no longer practical politics. The Hanoverians were placed on the throne by our fathers, and my generation has grown up to accept them as the reigning house.

STANWAY. Well, if Peter Davis hasn't the courage of his ancestors——

PETER. Zounds, I'll make you take those words back, Jack Stanway—— [*Draws sword.*]

STANWAY [*drawing his*]. I take nothing back, Peter Davis.

PETER. You'll take that back——

STANWAY. I won't.

PETER. Have at ye.

[*They fight.*]

PRINCE. Jack——

DAVIS. Peter——

PRINCE. Stop, Jack——

DAVIS. Peter, I pray you——

STANWAY. Nay, don't stop us, your highness——

DAVIS. Peter——

PETER. Keep back, Uncle.

[*The fight continues, until STANWAY is wounded in the right arm; he drops rapier, and clasps left hand to arm.*]

STANWAY. Hang you, Davis.

[*PRINCE hurries up to STANWAY, while DAVIS keeps PETER off.*]

PRINCE. What is it, Jack?

STANWAY. Not much, your highness—a slight cut. Something to tie round here, your highness. Please, quick. [*The PRINCE binds handkerchief round his arm.*] Ah, thank you, your highness. It's all right. I'll go on.

PRINCE. No, Jack, I forbid you.

STANWAY. But, your highness——

PRINCE. Your sword, Jack. [*He surrenders it.*] And yours, sir. [*PETER surrenders his.*] And now——

PETER. But, your highness, he insulted me——

DAVIS. Now, Peter, be quiet.

PETER. No man of honour can let an insult like that pass, and I'll——

PRINCE. Zounds, man, is this the time to——

PETER. I'll make him take back what he said——

STANWAY. Not a word of it, Davis——

PRINCE. 'Sblood, stop, will you—both of you. This is no time to talk of fighting.

PETER. My seconds will wait on yours next week, Stanway.

STANWAY. Let 'em, egad! I'll meet you whenever you like—sword or pistol, choose your own weapon.

PRINCE. Zounds, an end to it. There are other matters to be settled than your quarrels. [*To DAVIS*] Here, sir, take your nephew into the other room, until he can behave reasonably.

DAVIS. Ay, your highness. Peter, come, Peter.

PETER. No, look here, Uncle, I'm——

[*Protests as the PARSON pulls him off through door L.*]

PRINCE [*turning to STANWAY*]. And you, Jack, ought to know better——

STANWAY. But I was quite justified, your highness——

PRINCE. Tush, man—a few words spoken in haste to a man of spirit, and swords are drawn at once. A plague upon it, there wouldn't be so many senseless duels fought,

if only we kept our deuced tongues under better control. Now, look, Jack——

[The door at back is hurriedly thrown open, and a naval CAPTAIN and four SAILORS rush in.]

CAPTAIN. That's them. Seize those men there.

SAILORS. Ay, ay, Cap'n.

[FIRST and SECOND SAILORS seize STANWAY, and THIRD and FOURTH SAILORS seize PRINCE, forcing their arms behind their backs.]

PRINCE. Zounds, what's this for?

THIRD SAILOR } *[together]* { Keep still, will ye?
FOURTH SAILOR } { 'Old 'ard, will 'un?

STANWAY. Oh, my arm. Keep off.

SECOND SAILOR } *[together]* { Not so nayther. Back with
FIRST SAILOR } { 'un.
Doant'ee struggle so.

CAPTAIN. Tie their hands up!

SECOND AND FOURTH SAILORS. Ay, ay, Cap'n.

PRINCE. What's the meaning of this, Captain?

CAPTAIN. Od's fish, you know what it means right enough. Have you got their hands tied?

SECOND SAILOR. One moment, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN. Come on, jump to it, ye lubbers.

THIRD SAILOR. We've got this 'un, Cap'n.

FIRST SAILOR. All right, now, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN. Right. Stand aft, then. *[As DAVIS enters through door L.]* Look out, there.

DAVIS *[entering]*. Inteet to goodness, what is all this?

FOURTH SAILOR. Stand back there.

[Goes across and keeps DAVIS over on L.]

CAPTAIN *[to THIRD SAILOR]*. Shut that door, Mason.

[THIRD SAILOR shuts door L.] Stand to it, and see that no one comes in. You *[pointing SECOND SAILOR to door at back]* stand by that door there, and don't let anyone through.

[SECOND SAILOR stands to door at back.]

PRINCE *[impatiently, facing it out]*. Now, Captain, will

you explain what you mean by all this? 'Sblood, sir, you haven't heard the end of this, by any means.

CAPTAIN. Nor you, either, I'm thinking.

DAVIS. Look you, Captain, I think that you are teceived and mistaken.

CAPTAIN. And who on earth are you, sir?

DAVIS. I am the parson of this parish, and these gentlemen are my friends.

CAPTAIN. Gadzooks, sir, that may be, and who am I to know what rebels ye have for friends?

DAVIS. Repels? [*Advancing forward*] Now, Captain, I peseech you——

FOURTH SAILOR. Keep back, will'ee? [DAVIS *retreats*.

CAPTAIN. Search that one's pockets [*to* FIRST SAILOR, *who proceeds to search the pockets of the* PRINCE. *To* DAVIS] Now, hark'ee, sir. Belike you may not know who these two are, but I'd have 'ee know——

STANWAY. 'Sblood, Captain, you're making a great mistake.

CAPTAIN. Ha, ha! Am I?

STANWAY. My friend here is Lord Ravenspur——

CAPTAIN. Lord Ravenspur? Ha, ha, we'll see.

PRINCE [*struggling as* FIRST SAILOR *searches his pocket for papers*]. Egad, Captain, I protest against this treatment.

CAPTAIN. Protest till you're black in the face, it won't make any difference. [*To* STANWAY] When did ye arrive here?

STANWAY. Why, this evening.

CAPTAIN. Where from?

STANWAY. Now, look here, Captain, I'm hanged if I'm going to be cross-examined like this. Zounds, sir, I tell you you're making some mistake.

[FIRST SAILOR *has given* CAPTAIN *the papers he has taken from* PRINCE.

CAPTAIN [*having glanced at papers, fiercely*]. Ye've just crossed from France.

STANWAY. Well, what if we have? There's nothing wrong in that, is there?

CAPTAIN. Now, mark'ee; my ship has been lying hove to off the French coast some days. Two days ago I received news that certain rebels who escaped after 'forty-five were crossing to England—and one of those rebels was the Pretender himself.

STANWAY. But, od's faith, Captain, you don't take us for these plaguy rebels? 'Sblood, you can't arrest us, sir, on the mere suspicion that we're rebels.

DAVIS. Ay, Captain, there is needs of warrants. For, look you, the law forpids the arrest and apprehension and imprisonment of tacent and law-apiding subjects, without the tue processes of law. Your warrant, Captain, I peseech you show it me.

CAPTAIN. Gadzooks, sir, and what business is it of yours?

DAVIS. Pless me, it is inteet my pusiness, and the pusiness of us all, for it is clean contrary against the laws, look you, to arrest and teprive of liperties without a warrant. [*Insistently*] I pray you, your warrant.

CAPTAIN. Zounds, here's my authority, if that's what you want. [*Throws a paper on the table.*]

DAVIS. Ay, I thank you. [*Takes paper, and opens it. It is upside down.*] Pless me. [*Turns it right way up, and reads*] "To all whom it may concern,—whereas of late certain fugi—fugitive—fugitive——" [*Looks up, over the document.*] It is extremely ill written, look you. [*Reading again*] "Whereas of late certain fugitive repels—who in the year of our Lord 1745—pore arms——" [*Looks up at lamp.*] This light is fery pad. I cannot see to read it properly. One moment.

[*Puts his hand up to light, pretending to turn up wick. Instead, he turns it right down, leaving the room in complete darkness. There is a loud and confused hub-bub, above which the CAPTAIN's voice is heard.*]

CAPTAIN [*in darkness*]. Stand to that door there. . . . Guard that door. Don't let anyone through. Get a light, will'ee; fetch the landlord. Landlord, bring a light.

[*After a long pause, JOHN enters with a taper.*

JOHN. All right, your honour. Coming, your honour. Here's a light.

CAPTAIN. Light the lamp, ye swab. [*Roars.*] Jump to it. [*JOHN lights lamp. In the darkness the PRINCE has escaped by the aid of DAVIS through the secret panel, in front of which the PARSON is now standing, unable to get away, as his coat has been caught as the panel slid back into its closed position. When he thinks he is unobserved, he tries to free himself, but without success. The CAPTAIN addresses DAVIS.*] And you, sir, why the deuce do 'ee play these tricks with a lamp?

DAVIS. I am sorry, Captain—it was a mistake, look you.

CAPTAIN. Zounds, I should think so, too.

SECOND SAILOR [*at door*]. Cap'n, there's one of 'un's gone. [*Shouting.*

CAPTAIN. What d'ye say?

SECOND SAILOR. 'E's gone, Cap'n—one of the prisoners.

CAPTAIN. 'Sblood, man, what d'ye let him go for? After him, quick.

SECOND SAILOR. 'E didn't go through 'ere, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN. What?

SECOND SAILOR. I was standing 'ere the 'ole time, Cap'n.

FIRST SAILOR. Ay, that's so, Cap'n. I was 'ere, too. 'E couldn't 'av' got through, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN. Then he went that way. [*Points to door L.*

THIRD SAILOR. No one came through 'ere, Cap'n.

FOURTH SAILOR. Ay, ay, Cap'n. No one could 'a' got by without my knowing.

CAPTAIN. Were ye there the whole time?

THIRD SAILOR. Ay, ay, I didn't leave it, Cap'n. Landlord came through 'ere with a light. That's all, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN [*to JOHN*]. Did anyone come through into your room?

JOHN. Surely, no, your honour.

CAPTAIN. Well, I'll teach 'ee to harbour rebels. And you, there, too [*turning to DAVIS*] helping rebels to escape. Gadzooks, it's a hanging matter. [*To SAILORS by door L.*] Bring him [*indicates DAVIS*] over here.

THIRD AND FOURTH SAILORS. Ay, ay, Cap'n.

DAVIS. Now, look you, I—— [*Struggles.*]

THIRD SAILOR. Come on.

FOURTH SAILOR. Move, will 'ee. Why, look 'ere, Cap'n——

CAPTAIN. Hurry up, bring him——

FOURTH SAILOR. But 'is coat, Cap'n——

CAPTAIN. What about it, man?

FOURTH SAILOR. It's caught up, Cap'n—in 'ere.

CAPTAIN. What d'ye say? [*Goes over to investigate.*] So this was the way he went, was it? Very clever, egad—but [*fiercely*] not clever enough, I'm thinking. [*To FIRST and THIRD SAILORS*] Tie his hands up, quick.

FIRST AND THIRD SAILORS. Ay, ay, Cap'n.

[*They proceed to do so.*]

DAVIS. Captain, I pray you——

CAPTAIN. Zounds, hold your noise, will ye? [*To SECOND SAILOR*] Here you, put your cutlass in here—in this crack.

SECOND SAILOR. Ay, ay, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN. Now, force it back—that way. [*Panel slides open, releasing the PARSON's coat. FIRST and THIRD SAILORS take DAVIS on one side, the PARSON vigorously protesting.*] That's got it. [*To SECOND SAILOR*] Follow down there. [*Pointing through panel*] See where it comes out.

SECOND SAILOR. Ay, ay, Cap'n.

[*Disappears down secret passage behind panel.*]

CAPTAIN. A deuced cunning trick of yours. And, by thunder, it'd have come off, too, if that coat of yours hadn't caught in there. [*Pause.*] So he *was* the Pretender,

was he? Well, I don't think he'll get far away. We've got search-parties all along the coast, d'ye see? [*A knock is heard on door at back.*] See who's there. Hold ye, we won't have any more plaguy tricks. [*To FIRST SAILOR*] Make him give the password.

FIRST SAILOR. Ay, ay, Cap'n. [*At door*] Hark'ee, give the password.

VOICE [*off*]. 'Anover.

FIRST SAILOR [*to CAPTAIN*]. All right, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN. See who it is.

FIRST SAILOR. Ay, ay, Cap'n. [*Exit.*]

CAPTAIN [*to JOHN*]. And you there, did ye know it was rebels ye were harbouring?

JOHN. Surely, no, your honour. You see, your honour, an innkeeper mayn't refuse to accommodate travellers o' quality—it's the law, your honour.

CAPTAIN. Well, if I only thought ye knew it was the Pretender, zounds, I'd have ye hanged with the rest of them.

JOHN. Oh, no, your honour.

CAPTAIN. Silence, will'ee. Get out of here.

JOHN. Very good, your honour.

[*Exit by door L. FIRST SAILOR returns and approaches and salutes CAPTAIN.*]

FIRST SAILOR. A message from the bosun, Cap'n. 'E's taken two boats over to the smuggling-ship, Cap'n, and boarded 'er. She's called the *Free Rover*, Cap'n. Bosun says they don't seem to 'ave left any one aboard 'er, an' 'e's taken full possession of 'er.

CAPTAIN. Good. [*To STANWAY*] Your *Free Rover* won't carry any more traitorous rebels. Nor will she do any more smuggling, now she's boarded by our men, d'ye see? She's a trim craft, and she'll suit very well as a King's ship. Gadzooks, she gave us a good chase in the Channel. But still, we'd have overhauled ye, if it hadn't been for the fog.

STANWAY. You knew the Prince was going to cross to England?

CAPTAIN. Ay, we were kept well informed of the Pretender's movements.

[SECOND SAILOR *returns through open door.*

SECOND SAILOR [*out of breath*]. They've got 'un, Cap'n. [*Breath.*] This passage comes out under the cliffs. [*Breath.*] When 'e came out, 'e ran straight into one of the search-parties.

CAPTAIN. Good. [*Claps his hands together.*] Zounds, it's been a thunnering good night's work. Here, bring those two prisoners down to the shore. [*To SECOND SAILOR*] You come down with me.

SECOND SAILOR. Ay, ay, Cap'n.

[*Exeunt CAPTAIN and SECOND SAILOR at back, the CAPTAIN asking as they go: "Whereabouts along the shore have they got him?"*

FIRST SAILOR. Come on.

[*Takes STANWAY by the arm, and through door at back.*

THIRD SAILOR. Get a move on, will'ee.

[*Exeunt THIRD SAILOR and DAVIS, the latter protesting. As the FOURTH SAILOR is about to leave, PETER DAVIS dashes in through door on L. followed by JOHN. PETER leaps on back of the FOURTH SAILOR and claps hand over his mouth, bearing him to the ground.*

FOURTH SAILOR [*muffled*]. Hold'ee, get off, will'ee. What the deuce——

PETER. Quick, John, a gag—quick, man.

JOHN. Ay, ay, 'ere you are, your honour.

[*Gives PETER a cloth with which the latter gags the*

FOURTH SAILOR.

PETER. Tie his feet, John.

JOHN. Ay, ay, sir.

PETER. Quickly, man. Got it?

JOHN. Ay, your honour.

PETER. Now, help me get his coat off. Take that arm. Quickly, man. Good, that's got it. [*They strip jacket off the FOURTH SAILOR.*] Now tie his hands up, quick. [JOHN does so. PETER pulls off his own jacket as he goes to door L., where he calls] Jackie.

[*He quickly puts on the SAILOR's jacket.*]

JACK [off]. Coming, sir.

PETER [coming back]. Got his hands tied?

JOHN. Ay, ay, sir.

PETER. Did you hear them give the password?

JOHN. Now, let me think, your honour. Ay——
'Anover.

PETER. Hanover?

JOHN. Ay, that's it.

[*Enter JACK.*]

PETER. Jackie, run down to the cave as hard as you can, and tell Captain Storm the Prince has been captured. Tell him to row out at once to the King's ship with all hands.

JACK. Ay, ay, sir.

PETER. Tell him to come up on the port beam. Run, ye little devil.

[*Pushes him out.*]

JACK. Ay, ay. [*Exit, running, through door at back.*]

JOHN. What are ye going to do, your honour?

PETER. Do, man? Row out to the King's ship, d'ye see? Hurry up, there's no time to be wasted.

JOHN. D'ye want me to——

PETER [cutting him short]. Come on, man.

JOHN. Ay, ay, sir.

[*Exeunt, running, through door at back.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE III

The scene is part of the fore-deck of the King's ship. Along the back of the scene are the bulwarks, about three feet in height. Beyond these is darkness (a black back-cloth). On the L. can be seen the timbers of the deck-house, from which a subdued light is thrown on to the deck. Various ropes, shrouds, etc., complete the impression of a ship by night.

Two sailors are on deck, JONAS and DANIEL. JONAS is sitting on a barrel up R., and DANIEL is looking over the bulwarks.

JONAS. I pities they poor fellows ashore, there. Are they still searching, Daniel?

DANIEL. Ay, still going back'ard and for'ard, up and down the shore with their lanterns. Hang me, if at this distance they don't look like so many 'eathenish fire-flies. . . . You remember them fire-flies, Jonas, we used to get aboard when we lay off South Ameriky?

JONAS. Could a man 'elp *not* remembering, Daniel? Drat me, but they *could* sting, Daniel.

DANIEL. Still, there's one thing about a firefly, Jonas.

JONAS. An' what's that?

DANIEL. Well, it *do* give a man a fair chance, Jonas. It bears down upon 'un, you see, with its port and star-board lights ashowing, an' gives a man time to tack about, so to speak. But moskeetesses, Jonas——

JONAS. Oo, ay, moskeetesses.

DANIEL. Moskeetesses is the plaguy limit, Jonas.

JONAS. Ay. An' belikes that's what the Cap'n's temper'll be, if 'e don't find the rebels 'e's 'unting for.

DANIEL. Well, 'e's main set on getting 'em, Jonas. Why, look'ee, 'e's left barely a score o' men on board.

JONAS. I suppose the bosun's party 'av' boarded the ship yonner?

DANIEL [*looks*]. Well, there ain't no lights on her, Jonas.

JONAS. No, likely as not the Cap'n told 'un not to give any indication he's aboard 'er, in case they smugglers should row out to 'er again.

DANIEL. 'E's a deep 'un, is the Cap'n, Jonas.

JONAS. Ay, Old Stickleback may be a little rampageous at times——

DANIEL. An' some'ut given to stamping——

JONAS. An' shouting——

DANIEL. But 'e's a deep 'un, Jonas.

JONAS. Ay.

[*A pause. Then out of the darkness comes a faint hail: "Ahoy!" DANIEL looks over the bulwarks.*]

DANIEL [*in answer*]. Ahoy! [*To JONAS*] Some one down below there in a boat. I can't see 'oo it is.

JONAS. Better ask 'im for the password, Daniel.

DANIEL. Ay. Ahoy, there below. Give the password.

PETER [*from below, in a disguised voice*]. Hanover.

DANIEL. What is it ye want?

PETER [*below*]. Orders from the Cap'n. The Cap'n says ye're to send another boat ashore with a full complement of men.

DANIEL. Did ye 'ear that, Jonas? Old Stickleback wants another boat sent.

JONAS. Blazes, I 'ope I'm not one of 'em 'oo 'as to go. I dunno as 'ow I wants to go rampaging up an' down the beach at this time o' night, after rebels that belikes are not there.

DANIEL. Go aft, will'ee, Jonas, and report.

JONAS. Ay.

[*Exit JONAS, by gangway between deck-house and the bulwarks, up L.*]

DANIEL [*calling over side*]. 'Av' ye found any o' they rebelses yet?

PETER. No.

DANIEL. An' it's not likely ye will, I'm thinking. [*A pause.*] I say, 'ow's Old Stickleback taking it?

PETER [*below*]. Stamping about nineteen to the dozen.

DANIEL. Ay, 'e's a fust-rate stamper, 'e is. [*A pause.*]

PETER. Ahoy, there!

DANIEL. Ahoy!

PETER [*below*]. Coming aboard.

DANIEL. Ay, ay.

[*PETER starts to clamber over the bulwarks at the back.*]

PETER [*at present only the top part of his body is showing*]. 'Ow many men are there left on board?

DANIEL. Oh, twenty odd, I should think. [*PETER finishes climbing over bulwarks.*] Jonas 'as gone aft to tell 'em about sending another boat. [*DANIEL catches sight of PETER's breeches.*] Why, mate [*pointing to his breeches*], what 'av' ye done to your— [*Breaks off.*] Look 'ere, 'oo are you?

PETER [*over his shoulder, as he jumps on DANIEL*]. Come on, John, quick. [*JOHN clambers overboard.*]

DANIEL [*struggling*]. 'Elp, Jonas, quick, 'ere—

[*PETER claps his hand over DANIEL's mouth. JOHN comes up to help PETER.*]

PETER. Quickly, John, gag him.

JOHN. Ay, ay.

PETER. Tie his feet up, quick.

JOHN. Right you are, your honour.

PETER. I'll see to his hands. [*Does so.*] Got them tied?

JOHN. Ay, young sir.

PETER. Good. Now put him over here. [*Points to back.*] Quick, lift him up. Good, that's got it.

[*They put him at back.*]

JOHN [*mopping forehead, and sitting down on the barrel R.*]. Well, that were a quick row, your honour—against a nasty swell, too. When a man's the wrong side of forty, your honour, 'e can't do the things 'e used to do, not no-'ow. Now Hi remembers when me and Hadmiral

Vernon—[PETER, *who has been taking no notice, goes off L.*]—were hove to off Porto Bello—on the Spanish Main, mark ye. One day the Hadmiral comes running hup the companion-way, puffing like a grampus. “Goodmarsh,” sez ’e, “it’s a matter o’ bellows to mend, Goodmarsh,” sez ’e, puffing like. “Surely, your honour,” I sez—[*Notices PETER’s absence.*] But where are ye, young sir? [*Looks round and then over bulwarks at back. Scratches head.*] Mighty strange, surely. [*The sound of a boat putting off is heard—the noise of oars in rowlocks sounding above the swish of the waves. PETER comes in L.*] Ah, ’ere you are, your honour.

PETER [*jubilantly*]. They’ve got the boat off, John. [*Points to R., towards the bows, over the bulwarks.*] Look, you can see her pulling away now.

JOHN. Are there many more aboard, your honour?

PETER. No, only just a handful. They’re aft, now, below decks, playing dice.

JOHN. D’ye think they’ll ’ear us, your honour?

PETER. No, there’s not much fear of that—they’re too interested in their game, and only too thankful *they* weren’t lugged out to man that boat. Look here, we’ll take this one [*points to DANIEL*] back here. Give a hand.

JOHN. Ay, ay, your honour.

[*They carry DANIEL off L. and re-enter. PETER crosses to bulwarks and looks aft, to L.*]

PETER [*anxiously*]. Can you see any boat yet, John?

JOHN. Why, no, young sir. But I ain’t yet got my sea-eyes—so to speak. You see, your honour, when a man ’asn’t been to sea for ten year, ’e finds things main difficult at first. Which reminds me of what Hadmiral Vernon said to me one day, when we were laying off Porto Bello—on the Spanish—

PETER. Zounds, man, a plague on your Porto Bello.

JOHN. Ay, you’re right, young sir. A more plaguy spot

I've never aknownd, either afore or since. You see, your honour, it's they dratted marshes.

[The sound of a boat approaching is heard.]

PETER *[looking over side]*. 'There's a boat coming, John. Look, along there. *[Points L.]* D'ye see it?

JOHN. Surely.

PETER. Ahoy! there.

STORM *[off]*. Ahoy!

PETER *[calls]*. Is that you, Captain?

STORM *[off]*. Ay, ay. Is that you, Mister Peter?

PETER. Ay.

STORM *[off]*. Steady all, ye lubbers. *[Noise.]* Are ye there, young sir?

PETER. Ay, Captain.

STORM *[off]*. Coming aboard, young sir.

PETER. Good. *[To JOHN]* 'Sblood, we'll do it yet, John.

[STORM clambers over bulwarks at back, and during the next few speeches the SMUGGLERS and JACK swarm aboard.]

STORM. Well, 'ere we are, young sir. *[Calls over side.]* Come aboard, ye lubbers. *[Then to PETER]* And what might it all mean, young sir?

PETER. The King's men have captured the Prince, Captain—and my uncle and Stanway as well.

STORM. Ay, so young Jackie told me.

PETER. They surprised them at the inn, and are bringing them off shore now. They'll be here any moment.

STORM. So that's how the wind's blowing, is it?

PETER. How many men have you got, Captain?

STORM. Twenty, young sir, all told. Are there many more King's men left aboard?

PETER. About half a dozen. They're aft, down below.

STORM. Well, then, young sir, you go with these two *[indicates JERRY and TOBIAS]*, an' keep 'em below decks. Guard the companion-way, d'ye see?

PETER. Ay, Captain. *[Exit PETER, JERRY, and TOBIAS.]*

STORM. 'Ere, you [*to BART*], stand there, an' keep your port eye open for any boat coming off shore.

BART. Ay, ay, Cap'n.

STORM. 'Ere, Silas, go for'ard, an' be ready to cut the cable, when I tells ye.

SILAS. Ay, ay, Cap'n. [*Exit SILAS as to bows, R.*]

STORM. You, Ben 'Awkins, get aft with those others who've boarded along there. [*Points L.*] Get up aloft, will'ee, with 'em, an' unfurl the top-sails. Avast ye, jump to it!

BEN. Ay, ay, Cap'n. [*Exit L.*]

JOHN. They've put a boarding-party on the *Free Rover*, Cap'n.

STORM. Rot my scuppers, what's that ye say? Boarded the *Free Rover*?

JOHN. Ay, Cap'n.

STORM. Smite my yard-arm—but she was a neat little craft. Boarded 'er? [*His face falls, as the full realization of his loss dawns upon him. Then his face lights up with fury.*] Shiver my riggings, but I'll raise such an 'urricane about their ears they'll never no more come to safe anchorage.

BART. Look, Cap'n, there's a boat coming up on the port bow.

[*The sound of a boat approaching is heard. STORM looks over the side.*]

STORM [*to three of the SMUGGLERS*]. Now, look ye, ye three keep up there in the bows. [*Points R. The three exeunt R.*] The rest of ye, come aft with me, all of ye, quick.

[*Exit L. The stage is now empty. The sound of the approaching boat comes nearer.*]

CAPTAIN [*off*]. Steady her. [*Pause.*] Toss oars. [*Pause.*] Ship oars. [*Pause.*] Get aboard there. [*THIRD SAILOR climbs aboard, followed by FIRST SAILOR.*] Take the prisoners aboard.

THIRD SAILOR. Ay, ay, Cap'n.

FIRST SAILOR. Come on up there.

[FIRST *and* THIRD SAILORS *help* PRINCE, STANWAY *and* DAVIS *aboard*.

THIRD SAILOR. Move along, will ye. Stand back there.
[Points L.]

STORM [off L]. Out with ye, ye lubbers.

[SMUGGLERS *and* STORM *rush in from* L. *and* R. JEM *and* BART, *aided by* JOHN *and* JACK, *seize* FIRST *and* THIRD SAILORS.

STORM [now dominates the situation]. Push off the boat there. [BILL *does so*.] Ahoy, there, for'ard, cut 'er cable. [Confused cries come from the CAPTAIN's boat at back.] Aloft, there, crowd 'er canvas. [Turns to the PRINCE.] We'll 'av' ye free in a moment, your highness. [Calls above] Ahoy there, aloft, rig 'er top-sails. [To SMUGGLERS] Got those tied up there?

BART. One moment, Cap'n.

STORM. Stir yourselves, ye swabs. 'Ere, John, untie 'is 'ighness.
[JOHN *does so*.

BILL. All right now, Cap'n.

STORM. Take 'em aft, then, and put 'em below 'atches. Move to it. ["Ay, ay, Cap'n," etc. Exeunt SMUGGLERS with SAILORS. This leaves on deck: STORM, JACK, who is looking aft over the bulwarks, PRINCE, STANWAY, and DAVIS, who by now have their hands free.] Ahoy, there, aloft, set your stun'sails.

[A faint "Ay, ay, Cap'n," from the distance in answer.

JACK [turning excitedly from the side]. We're drawing away from them, Cap'n.

STORM. Good, she's beginning to feel the wind.

[The sound of the wind is heard as well as that of the waves. The shrouds and ropes stir in the wind.

JACK [pointing aft, L.]. The Cap'n's standing up in the boat, waving his arms about like a windmill.

PRINCE [approaching STORM]. And so it's once more,

Captain, I have to thank you for getting me out of a tight corner.

STORM. Don't thank me, your 'ighness—it's young Mister Peter. [*Calls aloft.*] Aloft there, cram all the canvas ye can. [*To the PRINCE*] She's starting to run nicely, d'ye see. By thunder, it's good we've got the wind astern. I'm going aft, your 'ighness. I'll send Mister Peter to ye.

PRINCE. Thank you, Captain. [*Exit STORM. PRINCE turns to STANWAY and DAVIS.*] And you, my friends, I can't find words to thank you for all you've done this night. [*Takes their hands.*]

DAVIS. Inteet, your highness, what less could a Tavis do, look you, for a cause he pelieved true and righteous and honourable?

JACK. We've pulled right away from them, your highness. [*Points.*] Look, you can hardly see them aft there, in the dark. [*The PRINCE looks aft over bulwarks.*]

PRINCE. Ay, we're getting under way, now. [*Turns back, and laughs ruefully.*] Egad, Jack [*to STANWAY*], when we came over in the *Free Rover*, we didn't think we should be forced to beat this hasty retreat.

STANWAY. Why, no, your highness; it's a forlorn hope, this time.

PRINCE. I fear so, Jack.

STANWAY. But another time, your highness, who knows——?

PRINCE [*shrugging shoulders and giving a rueful laugh*]. Perhaps, Jack. [*Re-enter STORM with PETER.*]

STORM. 'Ere's young Mister Peter, your 'ighness.

PRINCE [*to PETER*]. Sir, words are too weak to express all my heart would fain say. I' faith, to you I owe my liberty and life itself. Will you accept, sir, the thanks of a poor exile, who hopes in happier days more adequately to reward your services to his cause?

PETER [*bowing*]. Your royal highness, I did no more

than any man of honour, who admired your highness and respected your cause, would have done.

STANWAY. Your hand, Davis. I'm sorry for what I said. *[They shake hands.]*

STORM. Well, your highness, if belikes the wind 'olds, we'll be off the French coast in the morning.

PRINCE. And then, Captain?

STORM. Well, you'd best land there, your 'ighness.

PRINCE. And you?

STORM. Well, I'm thinking that likely as not the Channel may not be too 'ealthy for Ebenezer Storm, d'ye see, having taken a King's ship in exchange for the *Free Rover*. And p'r'aps a longer swing of the cable wouldn't be much out of the reckoning. A voyage to South Ameriky, belike, an' a little free roving off the main—— There are possibilities, your 'ighness, although, mark ye, sailing under the Black Flag ain't always the smoothest o' navigation. . . . And now the wind 'ere strikes cold. Won't your 'ighness step below to the cabin?

PRINCE. Ay, thank you, Captain. Lead the way, and we'll follow. *[Exit STORM with PETER and STANWAY. PRINCE turns to DAVIS, who is looking over the bulwarks.]* You're coming below, sir?

DAVIS. Ay, thank you, your highness. I have always tesired to travel aproad. . . . *[Looks wistfully over the bulwarks.]* Put, pless me, I to not know what my pishop will say, for I have left my parishioners unattended, look you, without telling him. I pray they may receive a petter ficar than I have peen, although, look you, I tid love them. *[He is occupied with his thoughts for a moment.]* Put let us go pelow, your highness.

[Exeunt PRINCE and DAVIS, L. JACK is bending over the bulwarks at the back. He is singing softly one of the verses from the Jacobite song:]

They kent your hiding in the glen,
Death and exile braving.

*[As he comes to the chorus, his voice grows louder,
and he begins to move off slowly to the left:]*

Will ye no' come back again?

Will ye no' come back again?

Better loved ye canna' be—

Will ye no' come back again?

[Disappears, L.]

SLOW CURTAIN

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MADAME LA BARONNE

By H. HURFORD JANES

CHARACTERS

MADAME LA BARONNE DE MONTFORTVILLE

BARON CHARLES DE MONTFORTVILLE, *her son*

MONSIEUR DE BEAUFOND

MARIETTE

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MADAME LA BARONNE¹

A room in the Château Montfortville, Paris, 1793. A young and pretty maidservant, MARIETTE, is seated weeping silently by a window. A church clock strikes nine. Enter MADAME LA BARONNE DE MONTFORTVILLE, a tall dignified woman, dressed in black.

LA BARONNE [*grimly*]. It is done. Yes, it is done. [*The MAID looks up and then continues weeping.*] Mariette, dry your eyes. You must not dwell upon these tragedies. The Baron your master was happy to die——

MARIETTE. Ah, Madame la Baronne——!

LA BARONNE. My child, you have work to do. And Monsieur Charles [*to herself as if realizing it for the first time*], Monsieur le Baron—yes, Charles is the Baron now. He was alive, Henri was alive as we are now. A clock strikes—and he is dead. His son reigns in his stead. [*Thrusting these thoughts from her*] Stir yourself, Mariette—my son will be back with the carriage.

MARIETTE [*drying her eyes*]. Madame, they do say——
[*She breaks off.*]

LA BARONNE [*collecting a few trinkets from the table*]. What do they say?

MARIETTE. The Tribune suspect that Monsieur Charles has returned to Paris from the country.

LA BARONNE. In fifteen minutes, Monsieur Charles and I will be on the road to Calais.

¹ Applications regarding amateur performances of this play should be addressed to Messrs Samuel French, Ltd., 26 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, or 25 West 45th Street, New York.

MARIETTE. Oh, Madame la Baronne, why did you not go yesterday?

LA BARONNE. Yesterday my husband lived. To-day he is dead. Now we may run away. [*Suddenly*] And, Mariette—where do you intend to go when we have left Paris?

MARIETTE [*it has not occurred to her*]. I do not know.

LA BARONNE. Your mother is dead, I remember. And your father killed in the riots. Have you aunts or cousins?

MARIETTE. I—I shall take care of myself.

LA BARONNE [*sighing*]. I wish we could take you with us to England. You have been a good servant, Mariette. We have passports and papers for but two persons.

MARIETTE [*with emotion*]. Madame will return one day, perhaps.

LA BARONNE [*bitterly*]. One day—perhaps.

MARIETTE. When Paris is herself again.

LA BARONNE. When this château is wrecked and everything we hold dear destroyed.

MARIETTE [*anxiously*]. Monsieur Charles—le Baron is late. He has been gone over an hour.

LA BARONNE. He knows the house is being watched. It will take him time. He is leaving the carriage in the Rue St Honoré, where we shall join it. Mariette, you have remembered all my orders?

MARIETTE. All, Madame la Baronne.

LA BARONNE. When we have gone, you will bolt up all the doors and secure the windows. You will leave as quietly as possible by the back entrance. During our absence you will know nothing. Nothing, Mariette. If they ask you, "The Baroness, is she in England?" you will not know. "In Spain, Italy, Germany?" you will not know.

MARIETTE. I will not know, Madame.

LA BARONNE. You have carried the baggage to the garden entrance?

MARIETTE. Yes, Madame la Baronne.

LA BARONNE. Fetch my cloak—the one I wore the day they murdered her Majesty—my gloves and stick. [MARIETTE curtsies and goes out. LA BARONNE relaxes. One feels she is controlling her feelings with a great effort. She paces up and down lost in thought. MARIETTE returns carrying a black cloak, gloves, and a long walking-stick. She puts the cloak over LA BARONNE's shoulders.] Ah, thank you, Mariette.

MARIETTE. Madame, I am anxious about Monsieur Charles——

[Enter the young BARON CHARLES. He is very handsome and dressed in the fashion of Louis XVI. He hurries towards the BARONESS with an expression of concern upon his face, and stops short.

CHARLES [quietly]. The Baron!

[The BARONESS takes both his hands in hers as if imparting strength to him. MARIETTE curtsies unseen and goes out.

LA BARONNE. You heard the clock strike, Charles?

CHARLES [dully]. We all heard the clock strike.

LA BARONNE. Except him. [Briskly] Have you left the carriage where we arranged?

CHARLES. Yes, Madame. Jacques is there with it.

LA BARONNE. Then we must leave at once.

CHARLES [suddenly]. Madame, I—cannot go.

LA BARONNE [amazed]. Cannot go!

CHARLES [very rapidly]. I meant to tell you last evening when I returned from Lyons, but I couldn't. I couldn't. You had so much to think of. Monsieur my father——

LA BARONNE. Charles, what do you wish to tell me?

CHARLES. Madame, be gentle with me. It is—Mariette.

LA BARONNE [quietly]. It is Mariette. Well?

CHARLES. I love her. I cannot leave her here.

LA BARONNE. Charles!

CHARLES [*eagerly*]. There is room in the carriage. Jacques was our coachman. No one will know.

LA BARONNE. You are stupid.

CHARLES. Madame, we cannot leave her here alone. I tell you I love her. We wish to marry.

LA BARONNE [*calmly*]. We possess papers which will enable two persons to leave the country. Two citizens—one male and one female.

CHARLES. Madame, listen to me—oh, why didn't I tell you last night?

LA BARONNE [*with great patience*]. Charles, the carriage is waiting in the Rue St Honoré. Our papers are in order. Haven't we lost enough? Have you forgotten what happened a few minutes ago? Every moment wasted is dangerous to us. [CHARLES *hesitates*.] Must I remind you that you are the Baron de Montfortville?

CHARLES. What is that in Republican France?

LA BARONNE. Republican France does not exist—for us.

CHARLES. We can tell the guards at the frontier that Mariette is a servant.

LA BARONNE. Of whom? In the new state there are no servants. They are all masters. [*Pause*.] Charles, would you risk your life and mine for a wench who——

CHARLES. Has remained loyal to us. The only one who has.

LA BARONNE. Mariette is of the people. She is safe. We are not.

CHARLES [*gravely*]. Madame, the carriage is waiting. I shall join you in England.

LA BARONNE. Charles, for the sake of all I mean to you—of all your father meant——!

CHARLES [*firmly*]. I love you, Madame, and respect you as my mother. But I am my own master. I remain in France.

LA BARONNE [*almost piteously*]. When France has regained her reason, then perhaps we shall return. Values

will be different. I shall be blacking the shoes of a republican banker and you grooming his horses. Then we will consider this marriage.

CHARLES [*bowing elaborately to the BARONESS*]. I will see you to your carriage.

LA BARONNE [*desperately*]. Charles, I cannot abandon you in this manner. I may never see you again.

CHARLES [*handing the BARONESS her stick*]. Your servant, Madame la Baronne.

LA BARONNE. Mariette, does she know of this—love?

CHARLES [*quietly*]. Yes.

LA BARONNE [*bitterly*]. She was weeping. I thought it was for the Baron. It gave me strength. [*Enter MARIETTE with some jewels.*] My son has told me.

MARIETTE [*humbly*]. Madame la Baronne will never forgive me.

LA BARONNE. I do not blame you, child. [*She shrugs helplessly.*] Blame plays no part in life these days. [*Pause.*] My son will not leave Paris without you.

MARIETTE. Monsieur——!

LA BARONNE. And yet by remaining he risks everything.

MARIETTE. Monsieur—I beg of you to go. While there is time. They will soon find you out and kill you.

[*A bell rings off.*]

LA BARONNE. Callers at this hour? See who it is, Mariette. [*MARIETTE goes to the window and peeps out.*]

MARIETTE [*tensely*]. It is Monsieur de Beaufond, the Agent, with two gendarmes. Oh, Madame—they have come for Monsieur Charles.

CHARLES. I am ready for them.

MARIETTE. Oh, Madame—Monsieur. It is too late. What shall we do?

LA BARONNE. Let us keep our heads [*grimly*] for the moment at all events. Charles, take Mariette with you. The papers are in that box with my jewels. Go immediately to Calais and thence to London—as we arranged to do.

CHARLES. But you, Madame?

LA BARONNE. I will stay and detain the officers. Every instant means one step nearer freedom for you.

MARIETTE. I cannot leave you, Madame——

LA BARONNE [*impatiently*]. The Baron cannot leave you. You cannot leave me. Enough of this delay. I shall see you in London, Charles.

CHARLES. But, Mariette, what of her?

LA BARONNE [*slowly*]. It is better that our blood should mix with that of the people than be spilled by them.

CHARLES. But—you are forgetting your own safety.

LA BARONNE [*contemptuously*]. I am useless to the Republic. And I have the means to escape—given time. I shall be but a day behind you.

CHARLES [*doubtfully*]. If they should arrest you——

LA BARONNE. If they wished to arrest me they would have done so when they arrested your father. [*The bell rings again.*] They are growing impatient. Mariette, you will join Monsieur in the carriage in five minutes—the Rue St Honoré. But you must first admit these fellows. Madame la Baronne cannot open her own doors.

MARIETTE [*with emotion*]. I—I am taking Madame's place . . . ?

LA BARONNE. Yes, taking my place. Come, Charles. [*The BARONESS leads the way off. MARIETTE goes to follow them, and then suddenly turns away. The BARONESS is taking leave of her son. The bell rings a third time. The BARONESS comes back.*] Mariette—answer the bell. [*She holds out her hand.*] My son—be good to him.

[*MARIETTE seizes the hand and kisses it. She goes out, and the BARONESS removes her cloak and sits down wearily. MARIETTE re-enters. She is nervous, and hesitates before speaking.*]

LA BARONNE. I will see—whoever it is.

[*MARIETTE curtsies and goes out, returning immediately to announce.*]

MARIETTE. Monsieur Beaufond.

[*A middle-aged man, dressed with some care, enters with rather too much self-assurance to be self-assured. He bows.*]

DE BEAUFOND. Madame la Baronne!

[*He notices the cloak and gloves and glances curiously at the BARONESS.*]

LA BARONNE [*graciously inclining her head*]. Monsieur. Ah, Mariette. My little stroll with—Cæsar—must be postponed. [*To DE BEAUFOND*] My poodle. Fetch your cloak and take him yourself—as far as the Rue St Honoré. That will be far enough. Pardon me, Monsieur? [*She is all attention. MARIETTE does not move.*] Well, Mariette! Why are you waiting? Oh, yes! It was the Baron's chocolate. You must prepare that when you return.

MARIETTE [*curtsying, very moved*]. Madame . . . !

[*She goes out.*]

LA BARONNE. And now, Monsieur——

DE BEAUFOND. Beaufond.

LA BARONNE. Monsieur Beaufond, what do you wish with me?

DE BEAUFOND. I wish to see Monsieur Charles de Montfortville.

LA BARONNE. Monsieur le Baron.

DE BEAUFOND. Ah, yes! He is here?

LA BARONNE. Of course.

DE BEAUFOND [*surprised*]. He is here?

LA BARONNE. Where would you expect to find him, Monsieur? Hiding under a barrel in a wine-house?

DE BEAUFOND. I must ask you to take me to him.

LA BARONNE. Presently. He has only just risen from his bed. He is at his toilet. He is expecting you, Monsieur.

DE BEAUFOND. Is he?

LA BARONNE [*smiling*]. From the moment he became Baron. We are aware, Monsieur, that the friends of Madame Guillotine do not waste time.

DE BEAUFOND. If he is expecting me, Madame la Baronne, surely it is a waste of time on his part to prepare an elaborate toilet.

LA BARONNE [*casually*]. My family have traditions in such matters—even for La Guillotine. And, Monsieur, to some, powder and patches are of as much consequence as the Tricolour of France.

DE BEAUFOND [*sarcastically*]. It is hard to believe, Madame, that your husband died only this morning.

LA BARONNE [*absently*]. Yes, it is hard to believe it.

DE BEAUFOND. It was unwise of the young baron to return to Paris.

LA BARONNE. Very—but what are wise heads worth in Paris to-day, Monsieur? [*She shrugs.*]

DE BEAUFOND. Madame la Baronne, I must ask you to send for the Baron immediately.

LA BARONNE. Monsieur, I have told you that he is at his toilet. It would put him out for the day to be disturbed. Pray sit down and wait. [DE BEAUFOND *does so with a gesture of impatience.*] And you, Monsieur, I see that you too are a man of taste and of discretion. You have breeding, Monsieur.

DE BEAUFOND [*modestly*]. Oh, no.

LA BARONNE [*sighing*]. It is strange to see a gentleman of blood adopt so curious a *rôle*.

DE BEAUFOND. But then I am—no gentleman, Madame la Baronne.

LA BARONNE. No gentleman ever admits that he is, Monsieur. Tell me, how did you come to take up this—work?

DE BEAUFOND [*fanatically*]. I had a calling.

LA BARONNE. Ah!

DE BEAUFOND. I was valet to Monsieur le Marquis de Sanville.

LA BARONNE. Valet! Impossible!

DE BEAUFOND. While Monseigneur was my master, I

was his servant. But when La Belle France became my mistress——

LA BARONNE [*gently*]. Monsieur promoted himself!

DE BEAUFOND [*shaking his head sadly*]. Yes. At one time I was a devoted servant of the King and of the nobility. [*Smiling*] The King could do no wrong.

LA BARONNE. That's what he thought.

DE BEAUFOND. Times change. Conditions change.

LA BARONNE. True. And we are not always the guardians of our own fates, Monsieur. I am born of gentle blood, my mother a Duchess, my father a Marshal of France. Believe me, Monsieur, I would prefer to have been born of peasants, labouring in the fields. And you, Monsieur, you are born to be a valet. A valet! And yet what is there to distinguish between us? We are two human beings.

DE BEAUFOND. We are indeed. But Monsieur le Baron——

LA BARONNE. He will be here almost at once. [*Suddenly*] What an elegant ring, Monsieur!

DE BEAUFOND [*awkwardly*]. Monsieur le Marquis gave it to me [*rising*]——that is——

LA BARONNE. You took it? [*Hastily*] And your fingers show it to advantage, Monsieur. You have the hands of an artist.

DE BEAUFOND. Several people have told me that.

LA BARONNE [*surprised*]. Have they? [*Quickly*] Of course they have. And, Monsieur, pray pardon a personal question, but who is your tailor? The Baron, my son—he would be delighted.

DE BEAUFOND [*flattered*]. I wouldn't insult Monsieur le Baron.

LA BARONNE [*thoughtfully*]. Or is it the manner in which Monsieur wears his clothes.

DE BEAUFOND. The gendarmes are waiting for me, Madame. I have many calls to make.

LA BARONNE. The tumbrils must not be sent empty away? It is not surprising, Monsieur, that Paris has

become unfashionable. And the Marquis your—comrade—is he [*flicking her fingers*] gone?

DE BEAUFOND. I regret, Madame la Baronne, that Monsieur le Marquis was one of the first to—go.

LA BARONNE. De Sanville! Ah, I recall his death—he left it to the last, if you understand me, Monsieur. And met it nobly.

DE BEAUFOND. Yes. *How* Monsieur le Marquis died!

LA BARONNE [*reminiscently*]. How Monsieur le Marquis *lived*! He was an old friend of mine, years ago. La Marquise an old enemy.

DE BEAUFOND. Madame, time is important to me.

LA BARONNE. You are not the only one to whom time is important, Monsieur. [*Sighing*] My son has been so slow with his dressing—since his *valet de chambre* became a—Minister of Justice. Were matters as they *were*, I would ask you, Monsieur, to afford him a little assistance.

DE BEAUFOND [*annoyed*]. Madame la Baronne! Me! The . . .

LA BARONNE [*calmly*]. Why not? If by so doing you hastened his arrest and served—whoever you serve.

DE BEAUFOND. Madame is joking.

LA BARONNE. Monsieur knows best.

DE BEAUFOND. Such a suggestion is an insult.

LA BARONNE [*rising*]. Come, Monsieur, sweeten your tongue with a glass of wine.

DE BEAUFOND [*stiffly*]. Thank you, no, Madame.

LA BARONNE [*pouring out two glasses of wine and handing one to DE BEAUFOND*]. To whom shall we drink?

DE BEAUFOND [*admiringly*]. Madame, if they were all like you. . . .

LA BARONNE. God forbid—there'd be no Revolution and you, Monsieur, would be pressing knickerbockers in a garret. Shall we drink to—France?

DE BEAUFOND. To France. [*Lifting his glass*] To Equality. To Fraternity.

LA BARONNE [*lifting her glass*]. To Liberty!

DE BEAUFOND [*amiably*]. And now—Monsieur le Baron.

LA BARONNE. Monsieur, I have a confession to make. The Baron is not here.

DE BEAUFOND. Not here?

LA BARONNE. Monsieur—I am sorry. He is my son.

DE BEAUFOND [*wildly*]. He was here at dawn. He was seen leaving the house and returned shortly after nine.

LA BARONNE [*innocently*]. Did he, Monsieur?

DE BEAUFOND. You shall answer for this, Madame.

LA BARONNE. To—La Guillotine?

DE BEAUFOND. If I cannot have the Baron. . . .

LA BARONNE. Very well.

DE BEAUFOND [*slowly*]. He has gone to England?

LA BARONNE [*smiling*]. He has gone.

DE BEAUFOND [*in an official voice*]. Madame la Baronne de Montfortville, I arrest you in the name of the General Assembly of the French Republic for plotting, conniving, and assisting the escape of Monsieur le Baron de Montfortville, an enemy of France.

LA BARONNE. Do they make you say all that—every time?

DE BEAUFOND [*fuming*]. I am waiting, Madame.

LA BARONNE. So am I, Monsieur.

DE BEAUFOND [*roughly*]. For *what*?

LA BARONNE [*imperiously*]. My cloak, Monsieur. My gloves. . . . [*She is now the baroness, he instinctively the valet.*] My stick. [*He hands it to her with a bow and hurries obsequiously towards the door to open it for LA BARONNE. She sweeps majestically towards it, pausing upon the threshold to address him.*] Monsieur, you will be a valet in Heaven! Come!

CURTAIN

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EXERCISES

THE DANES ARE HERE!: *L. du Garde Peach*

1. What single idea or situation does this play turn upon?
2. Criticize the dialogue, suggesting reasons for the simplicity of the diction and the brevity of the speeches.
3. The author calls Alfreda "a masterful, domineering woman." Illustrate the truth of this description from what she says and does in the play.
4. *The Danes are Here!* presents an amusing historical picture. Where does the humour lie—in situation or dialogue or both?
5. Which character most arouses your sympathy, and why?
6. Would you call this a simple play to produce on the stage?

THE MAID OF DOMRÉMY: *Joe Corrie*

1. "The essence of all drama is conflict." Explain precisely the nature of the conflict in this play.
2. What are the most obvious contrasts in characterization? Would you call Jeanne a simple or complex character?
3. Illustrate the various ways in which the author conveys *historical* information in this play.
4. Where does the climax occur? Is it effectively worked up?
5. What dramatic purpose is secured by the introduction of (a) the Curé, (b) the cradle?
6. Explain the significance of Pierre's speech: "It's your voices that make you brave, not you." Why are the *Voices* supremely important in this play?

A PUPPET KING: *Stephen Wright*

1. Explain precisely the function of the narrator in this play.
2. Do you agree with the author's statement that this story of Lambert Simnel has a slender plot?
3. *A Puppet King* is really the second of three episodes in a historical play called *The Boy Kings*. Who were the other two boys, and what are the historical links between the three of them?

4. If you were putting this piece on the stage, how would you manage to secure quick changes between the scenes?
5. Would you call Lambert a likable character? How far is it true that he was "more sinned against than sinning"? What are your impressions of King Henry VII as portrayed in this play?
6. What is meant by the term 'pageant'? Does *A Puppet King* strike you as being rather a pageant than a drama?

THE KING DECIDES: *John Hampden*

1. Can you find any points of resemblance between this play and *The Maid of Domrémy*?
2. "Surely you have no just reason to hate this Colon?" says Talavera. What do you think of Nava's reply? How far is the character of the hero developed by means of his quarrels with Nava?
3. How do the ideas expressed by various speakers help you to recognize the period dealt with in this play?
4. "Beginnings and endings are highly important." How far is this fact illustrated by *The King decides*?
5. Contrast the two monarchs in their attitude towards Columbus. Prove from subsequent events which of the two was right.
6. Comment on the author's notes which follow the list of characters on p. 89. Which is of special importance to the producer?

PALISSY THE POTTER: *C. H. Abrahall*

1. Analyse the structure of this play. Would it be true to say that it contains two climaxes? If so, where do they occur?
2. Why are so many scenes necessary? Which of them do you consider most difficult to act?
3. The author has supplied a list of properties. Add a few suggestions about costume.
4. How far is the interest of this play heightened by (a) suspense, (b) variety of characterization?
5. What traits in the character of Palissy excite your sympathy and admiration? Would you call him a *tragic hero*?
6. Quote a few speeches which seem to you specially effective. If you were going to act in the play, which part would you choose, assuming that that of Bernard had already been allotted? Give reasons.
7. Criticize the ending.

ROYAL INTERLUDE: *Elizabeth Fitzroy*

1. What precisely do you understand by the word 'interlude' in the title of this play? Why is it aptly used?
2. "Lawfu' queen! Murderess an' heretic that she is." Account for Mistress Burns's estimate of the character of Mary Queen of Scots. Is it consistent with her actions later on?
3. Explain the historical references to Lord Murray and John Knox.
4. Show that the conflict in this play is one of 'wits.' How many people help to save the situation?
5. Which of the feminine characters do you consider has the best part in *Royal Interlude*? Give reasons.
6. What other play in the volume does this resemble most (a) historically, (b) dramatically?

CHARLES II AT CHARMOUTH: *C. J. Druce*

1. Give a brief synopsis of the plot of this play.
2. Explain the importance of the opening speeches.
3. Trace the growth of suspicion in Hull's mind against the Groom. Do you consider that Charles plays his part successfully?
4. How does the hostess help to save the situation? What is the special significance of her final speech?
5. "A tall, lanky lad and as black as a gipsy." How far is the Parson's description of Charles historically correct?
6. Collect as many references as possible in this play to illustrate the difference between Cavalier and Roundhead.

WHO COMES O'ER THE SEA?: *Kenneth Murray*

1. This play is the longest in the book. Do you consider it too long? Study the author's note in this connexion.
2. What are your impressions of Parson Davis?
3. Does the plot strike you as being very original, or are the 'ingredients' just ordinary?
4. Which scene do you consider most effective, and why?
5. Discuss the aptness of the title and sub-title, and make a brief summary of the historical information supplied by the play. By what means is this information given? Suggest other means by which it might be given. (Study some of the other plays for this purpose.)

6. If you were producing *Who comes o'er the Sea?* which parts would you give to your best three actors?
7. Why are so many stage-directions required in this play?

MADAME LA BARONNE: *H. Hurford Janes*

1. This is the last of three items in this book which deal with French history. Compare it very carefully with the other two, pointing out similarities and differences of treatment.
2. Elaborate the idea of dramatic conflict in this play.
3. What traits of character shown by La Baronne are typical of the French aristocrat of the period?
4. Quote a few examples of effective dialogue.
5. Criticize the ending, and suggest a sequel.
6. Do you know any other stories or plays dealing with the French Revolution? If so, give a brief synopsis of the plot of the one you like best.

GENERAL

1. Which of the characters in these plays would you call famous historical personages? Give reasons in each case.
2. The items in this volume are arranged in chronological order. How are you able to 'date' a play without being told beforehand?
3. Quote a few stage-directions that you would find especially helpful in acting one of the parts contained in this book.
4. Which of these plays do you consider has the strongest plot? Summarize it very briefly.
5. Select two items from this book which throw useful light upon social life.
6. Which hero and which heroine do you admire most? Sketch briefly the character of each.
7. Give examples of plays that could be acted (a) out of doors, and (b) on a small stage.
8. "The element of surprise, like that of suspense, is one of the most powerful aids in securing dramatic effect." Illustrate where possible from this collection.
9. Many boys and girls like 'dressing up' for a part. Which of these plays give the greatest opportunities for 'dressing up'? Suggest appropriate costumes for a play dealing with Roman Britain or the period of the Norman Conquest.
10. What are the chief duties of a producer and a stage-manager respectively?

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